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POEMS,

53
LYRICAL AND IDYLLIC.

BY

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

NEW YORK:

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1860.

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THIS volume is mostly composed of such productions, as have somewhat borne the tests of time and review—to which they have been subjected by the author, in the earnest desire to prefer his art before himself. If they exhibit too great variety of purpose, it is because he has not been able, at any one period during the last few years, to prepare enough matter to offer in the present form. What has been done is the result of unequal moments, saved from that daily task-work, which must first be met by every true man on whom it is imposed.

Except a few off-hand pieces, classed as "The

Tribune Lyrics," these Poems are now for the first time in type. One of the exceptions referred to, hastily written and by no means in accordance with the author's own standard, has been inserted from deference to a public sentiment, which received it kindly when it first appeared.

NEW YORK, *April*, 1860.

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POEMS.

Bohemia.

A PILGRIMAGE.

I.

When buttercups are blossoming
'Tis best to wed, the poets sung :
So all for love we paired in Spring—
Blanche and I—while life was young,
For Autumn's wealth brings Autumn's wane.
Sworn fealty to royal Art
Was ours, and doubly linked the chain,
With symbols of her high domain,
That twined us ever heart to heart ;
And onward, like the Babes i'the Wood,
We rambled, till before us stood
The outposts of Bohemia.

II.

For, roaming blithely many a day,
Eftsoons our little hoard of gold,
Like Christian's follies, slipt away,
Unloosened from the pilgrim's hold—
But left us just as blithe and free ;
Whereat our footsteps turned aside
From Lord and Lady of degree,
And bore us to that brave countrée
Where merrily we now abide :
 That proud and humble, poor and grand,
 Enchanted, golden, Gipseey-Land,
 The Valley of Bohemia.

III.

Together from the higher clime,
By terraced cliff and copse along,
Adown the slant we stept, in time
To many another pilgrim's song,
And came where faded far away,
Each side, the kingdom's ancient wall,
From breaking unto dying day :

Beyond, the magic valley lay,
 With glimpse of shimmering stream and fall :
 And here, between twin turrets, ran,
 Built o'er with arch and barbican,
 The entrance to Bohemia.

IV.

Beneath the lichened parapet,
 Grim-sculptured Gog and Magog bore
 The Royal Arms—Hope's Anchor, set
 In azure, on a field of or,
 With pendent mugs, and hands that wield
 A lute and tambour, graven clear ;
 What seemed a poet's scroll revealed
 The antique legend of the shield :
Gambrinus. Rex. held. Wassaille. here.
Joined. with. the. Kinge. of. Quetot.
O. worlde-worne. Pilgrim. passe. belowe.
Co. enter. fayre. Bohemia.

V.

No churlish warder barred the gate,

Nor other pass was needed there
Than equal heart for either fate,
And barren scrip, and hope to spare.
Through the gray archway, hand in hand,
We walked, beneath the rampart high,
And on within the wondrous land;
There, changed as by enchanter's wand,
My darling, fairer to the eye
Than ever, moved along serene
In hood and cloak—a Gipsev Queen,
Born princess of Bohemia!

VI.

A fairy realm! where slope and stream,
Champaign and upland, town and grange,
Like shadowy shiftings of a dream,
Forever blend and interchange:
A magic clime! where, hour by hour,
Storm, cloud and sunshine, fleeting by,
Commingle, and, through shine and shower,
Bright castles, lit with rainbows, tower—
Emblazoning the distant sky

With glimmering glories of a land
Far off, yet ever close at hand
As Hope, in brave Bohemia.

VII.

On either side the travelled way,
Encamped along the sunny downs,
The blithesome, bold Bohemians lay ;
Or hid, in quaintly-gabled towns,
At smoke-stained inns of musty date,
And spider-haunted attic nooks
In empty houses of the great,
Still smacking of their ancient state—
Strewn round with pipes and mouldy books,
And robes and buskins over-worn,
That well become the careless scorn
And freedom of Bohemia.

VIII.

For, loving Beauty, and, by chance,
Too poor to make her all in all,
They spurn her half-way maintenance,
And let things mingle as they fall ;

Dissevered from all other climes,
Yet compassing the whole round world,
Where'er are jests, and jousts at rhymes—
True love, and careless, jovial times—
Great souls by jilting Fortune whirled—
Men that were born before their day,
Kingly, without a realm to sway,
Yet monarchs in Bohemia ;

IX.

And errant wielders of the quill ;
And old-world princes, strayed afar,
In thread-bare exile chasing still
The glimpses of a natal star ;
And Woman—taking refuge there
With woman's toil, and trust, and song,
And something of a piquant air
Defiant, as who must and dare
Steer her own shallop, right or wrong :
A certain noble nature schools,
In scorn of smaller mincing rules,
The maidens of Bohemia.

X.

But we pursued our pilgrimage
Far on, through hazy lengths of road,
Or crumbling cities gray with age ;
And stayed in many a queer abode,
Days, seasons, years—wherein were born
Of infant pilgrims, one, two, three ;
And ever, though with travel worn,
Nor garnered for the morrow's morn,
We seemed a merry company ;
We, and the mates whom friendship, or
What sunshine fell within our door,
Drew to us in Bohemia.

XI.

For Ambrose—priest without a cure—
Christened our babes, and drank the wine
He blest, to make the blessing sure ;
And Ralph, the limner—half-divine
The picture of my Blanche he drew,
As Saint Cecilia 'mong the caves ;
She singing : eyes a holy blue,

Upturned and rapturous : hair, in hue,
Gold rippled into amber waves ;
There, too, is wayward, wild Lisette,
Dansense and warbler and grisette,
True daughter of Bohemia,

XII.

But all by turns and nothing long ;
And Rose, whose needle gains her bread ;
And bookish Sybil—she, whose tongue
The bees of Hybla must have fed ;
And one—a poet—nowise sage
For self, but gay companion boon
And prophet of the golden age ;
He joined us in our pilgrimage
Long since, one early Autumn noon
When, faint with journeying, we sate
Within a wayside hostel-gate
To rest us in Bohemia.

XIII.

In rusty garb, but with an air

Of grace, that hunger could not whelm,
He told his wants, and—"Could we spare
Aught of the current of the realm—
A shilling?"—which I gave; and so
Came talk, and Blanche's kindly smile;
Whereat he felt his heart aglow,
And said: "Lo, here is silver! lo,
Mine host hath ale! and it were vile,
If so much coin were spent by me
For bread, when such good company
Is gathered in Bohemia."

XIV.

Richer than Kaiser on his throne,
A royal stoup he bade them bring;
And so, with many of mine own,
His shilling vanished on the wing;
And many a skyward-floating strain
He sang—we chorusing the lay
Till all the hostel rang again;
But when the day began to wane,
Along the sequel of our way

He kept us pace, and, since that time,
We never lack for song and rhyme
To cheer us, in Bohemia.

XV.

And once we stopped a twelve-month, where
Five-score Bohemians began
Their scheme to cheapen bed and fare,
Upon a late-discovered plan ;
“For see,” they said, “the sum how small
By which one pilgrim’s wants are met !
And if a host together fall,
What need of any cash at all ?”
Though how it worked I half forget,
Yet still the same old dance and song
We found—the kindly, blithesome throng
And joyance of Bohemia.

XVI.

Thus onward through the Magic Land,
With varying chance. But once there past
A mystic shadow o’er our band,
Deeper than Want could ever cast,

For, oh, it darkened little eyes!
We saw our youngest darling die—
Then robed her in her palmer's guise,
And crossed the fair hands pilgrim-wise,
And, one by one, so tenderly,
Came Ambrose, Sybil, Ralph and Rose,
Strewing each sweetest flower that grows
In wildwoods of Bohemia.

XVII.

But last the Poet, sorrowing, stood
Above the tiny clay, and said :
"Bright little Spirit, pure and good,
Whither so far away hast fled?
Full soon thou tryest that other sphere :
Whate'er is lacking in our lives
Thou dost attain ; for Heaven is near,
Methinks, to pilgrims wandering here,
As to that one who never strives
With fortune—has not come to know
The pride and pain that dwell so low
In valleys of Bohemia."

XVIII.

He ceased ; and pointed solemnly
Through westward windows, and we saw
That lustrous castle of the sky
Gleam, touched with flame, and heard with awe,
About us, gentle whisperings
Of unseen watchers hovering near
Our dead, and rustling angel wings !
Now whether this or that year brings
The Valley's end, or, haply, here
Our pilgrimage for life must last,
We know not—but a sacred Past
Hath hallowed all Bohemia.

PENELOPE.*

Nor thus, Ulysses, with a tender word,
Pretence of state affairs, soft blandishment
And halt assurances, canst thou evade
My heart's discernment. Think not such a film
Hath touched these aged eyes, to make them lose
The subtlest mood of those even now adroop,
Self-conscious, darkling from my nearer gaze.
Full well I know thy mind, O man of wiles!
O man of restless yearnings—fate-impelled,
Fate-conquering—like a waif thrown back and forth
O'er many waters! Oft I see thee stand
At eve, a landmark on the outer cliff,
Looking far westward: later, when the feast

* See note.

Smokes in the hall, and nimble servants pass
Great bowls of wine, and ancient Phemeus sings
The deeds of Pelens' son, thy right hand moves
Straight for its sword-hilt, like a ship for home :
Then, when thou hearest him follow in the song
Thine own miraculous sojourn of long years
Through stormy seas, weird islands, and the land
Of giants, and the gray companions smite
Their shields, and cry—*What do we longer here !
Afloat ! and let the great waves bear us on !*
I know thou growest weary of the realm,
Thy wife, thy son, the people and thy fame.

I too have had my longings. Am I not
Penelope, who, when Ulysses came
To Sparta, and Icarius bade her choose
Betwixt her sire and wooer, veiled her face
And stept upon the galley silver-oared,
And since hath kept thine Ithacensian halls ?
Then when the hateful Helen fled to Troy
With Paris, and the Argive chieftains sailed
Their ships to Aulis, I would have thee go—

Presaging fame, and power, and spoils of war.
 So ten years past; meanwhile I reared thy son
 To know his father's wisdom, and, apart
 Among my maidens, wove the yellow wool.
 But then, returning one by one, they came—
 The island-princes; high-born dames, of Crete
 And Cephalonia, saw again their lords;
 Only Ulysses came not; yet the war
 Was over, and his vessels, like a troop
 Of cranes in file, had spread their wings for home.
 More was unknown. Then many a winter's night
 The servants piled great faggots, smeared with tar,
 High on the palace-roof; with mine own hands
 I fired the heaps, that, haply, far away
 On the dark waters, might my lord take heart
 And know the glory of his kingly towers.

So winter past: and summer came and went,
 And winter and another summer; then—
 Alas, how many weary months and days!
 But he I loved came not. Meanwhile thou knowest
 Pelasgia's noblest chiefs, with kingly gifts

And pledge of dower, gathered in the halls ;
But still this heart kept faithful, knowing yet
Thou wouldst return, though wreckt on alien shores.
And great Athene often in my dreams
Shone, uttering words of cheer. But, last of all,
The people rose, swearing a king should rule—
To keep their ancient empery of the isles
Inviolat and thrifty : bade me choose
A mate, nor longer dally. Then I prayed
Respite, until the web within my loom,
Of gold and purple curiously devised
For old Laërtes' shroud, should fall complete
From hands still faithful to his blood. Thou knowest
How like a ghost I left my couch at night,
Unravelling the labor of the day,
And warded off the fate, till came that time
When my lost sea-king thundered in his halls,
And with long arrows clove the suitors' hearts.
So constant was I ! now not thirty moons
Go by, and thou forgettest all : alas !
What profit is there any more in love ?
What thankless sequel hath a woman's faith !

Yet if thou wilt—in these thy golden years,
Safe-housed in royalty, like a God revered
By all the people—if thou yearnest yet
Once more to dare the deep and Neptune's hate,
I will not linger in a widowed age;
I will not lose Ulysses, hardly found
After long vigils; but will cleave about
Thy neck, with more than woman's prayers and tears,
Until thou take me with thee. As I left
My sire, I leave my son, to follow where
Ulysses goeth, dearer for the strength
Of that great heart which ever drives him on
To large experience of newer toils!

Trust me, I will not any hindrance prove,
But, like Athene's helm, a guiding star,
A glory and a comfort! O, be sure
My heart shall take its lesson from thine own!
My voice shall cheer the mariners at their oars
In the night watches; it shall warble songs,
Whose music shall o'erpower the luring airs
Of Nereïd or Siren. If we find

Those isles thou namest, where the golden fount
Gives youth to all who taste it, we will drink
Deep draughts, until the furrows leave thy brow,
And I shall walk in beauty, as when first
I saw thee from afar in Sparta's groves.
But if Charybdis seize our keel, or swift
Black currents bear us down the noisome wave
That leads to Hades, till the vessel sink
In Stygian waters, none the less our souls
Shall gain the farther shore, and, hand in hand,
Walk from the strand across Elysian fields,
'Mong happy thronging shades, that point and say:
"There go the great Ulysses, loved of Gods,
And she, his wife, most faithful unto death!"

THE SINGER.

O LARK ! sweet lark !

Where learn you all your minstrelsy ?

What realms are those to which you fly ?

While robins feed their young from morn till dark,

You soar on high—

Forever in the sky.

O child ! dear child !

Above the clouds I lift my wing

To hear the bells of Heaven ring ;

Some of their music, though my flights be wild,

To Earth I bring ;

Then let me soar and sing !

HELIOTROPE.

I WALK in the orange twilight,
Along a garden-slope,
To the shield of moss encircling
My beautiful Heliotrope.

O sweetest of all the flowerets,
That bloom where angels tread !
But never such marvellous odor
From heliotrope was shed,

As the passionate exhalation,
The dew of celestial wine,
That floats in tremulous languor
Around this darling of mine.

For, only yester-even,
I saw the dearest scene!
I heard the delicate footfall—
The step of my love, my queen.

Along the walk she glided:
I made no sound nor sign,
But ever, at the turning
Of her star-white neck divine,

I shrunk in the shade of the cypress,
And crouched in the swooning grass,
Like some Arcadian shepherd
To see an Oread pass.

But when she came to the border
At the end of the garden-slope,
She bent, like a rose-tree, over
That beautiful Heliotrope.

The cloud of its subtle fragrance
Entwined her in its wreath,

And all the while commingled
With the incense of her breath.

And so she glistened onward—
Far down the long parterre,
Beside the statue of Hesper,
And a hundred times more fair.

But ah ! her breath had added
The perfume that I find
In this, the sweetest of flowerets,
And the paragon of its kind.

I drink deep draughts of its nectar ;
I faint with love and hope !
Oh, what did she whisper to you,
My beautiful Heliotrope ?

ROSEMARY.

"There's Rosemary, that's for Remembrance."

YEARS ago, when a summer sun
 Warmed the greenwood into life,
I went wandering with one
 Soon to be my wife.

Birds were mating, and Love began
 All the copses to infold;
Our two souls together ran
 Melting in one mould.

Skies were bluer than ever before:
 It was joy to love you then,

And to know I loved you more
Than could other men !

Winds were fresh and your heart was brave,
Sang to mine a sweet refrain,
And for every pledge I gave
Pledged me back again.

How it happened I cannot tell,
But there came a cursed hour,
When some hidden shape of hell
Crept within our bower.

Sudden and sharply either spoke
Bitter words of doubt and scorn :
Pride the golden linklets broke—
Left us both forlorn.

Seven long years have gone since then,
And I suffered, but, at last,
Rose and joined my fellow men,
Crushing down the Past.

Far away over distant hills,
Now I know your life is led ;
Have you felt the rust that kills ?
Are your lilies dead ?

I am married, but you have dwelt,
Like a statue, cold and white ;
None, of all the crowd who knelt,
Read your soul aright.

O, I knew the tremulous swell
Of its secret monotone !
Its divinest music fell
On my ear alone !

Ever in dreams we meet with tears :
Lake and mountain—all are past :
With the stifled love of seven long years
Hold each other fast !

Close in my bosom nestling so,
Trusting all her noble heart,

How should one beside me know
Of my life apart?

Though the glamour of the night
Fades with morning far away,
Oftentimes a strange delight
Haunts the after-day.

Even now, when the summer sun
Warms the greenwood, out and in—
Even now my fancies run
On what might have been.

SUMMER RAIN.

YESTERMORN the air was dry
As the winds of Araby,
While the sun, with pitiless heat,
Glared upon the glaring street,
And the meadow fountains sealed,
Till the people every where—
And the cattle in the field,
 And the birds in middle air,
And the thirsty little flowers,
 Sent to heaven a fainting prayer
For the blessed summer showers.

Not in vain the prayer was said ;
For at sunset, overhead.

Sailing from the gorgeous West,
Came the pioneers, abreast,
Of a wondrous argosy—
The Armada of the sky!
Far along I saw them sail,
Wafted by an upper gale;
Saw them, on their lustrous route,
Fling a thousand banners out:
Yellow, violet, crimson, blue,
Orange, sapphire—every hue
That the gates of Heaven put on,
To the sainted eyes of John,
In that hallowed Patmian isle—
Their skyey pennons wore: and, while
I drank the glory of the sight,
Sunset faded into night.

Then diverging, far and wide,
To the dim horizon's side,
Silently and swiftly there,
Every galleon of the air,
Manned by some celestial crew,

Out its precious cargo threw,
And the gentle summer rain
Cooled the fevered Earth again.

Through the night I heard it fall
Tenderly and musical :
And this morning not a sigh
 Of wind uplifts the briony leaves,
But the ashen-tinted sky
 Still for earthly turmoil grieves,
While the melody of the rain,
Dropping on the window-pane—
On the lilac and the rose,
Round us all its pleasance throws,
Till our souls are yielded wholly
To its constant melancholy,
And, like the burden of its song,
Passionate moments glide along.

Pinks and hyacinths perfume
All our garden-fronted room ;
Hither, close beside me, Love !

Do not whisper—do not move :
Here we two will softly stay,
Side by side, the livelong day ;
Lean thy head upon my breast :
Ever shall it give thee rest,
Ever would I gaze to meet
Eyes of thine up-glancing, Sweet !
What enchanted dreams are ours !
While the melody of the showers
Dropping on the tranquil ground,
Dropping on the leaves and flowers,
Wraps our yearning souls around
In the drapery of its sound.

Still the plenteous streamlets fall :
Here two hearts are all in all
To each other ; and they beat
With no evanescent heat,
But softly, steadily, hour by hour,
With the calm, melodious power
Of the gentle summer rain,
That in Heaven so long hath lain,

And from out that shoreless sea
Pours its blessings tenderly.

Freer yet its currents swell!
Here are streams that flow as well,
Rivulets of the constant heart;
But a little space apart
Glide they now, and soon shall run,
Love-united, into one.
It shall chance, in future days,
That again the lurid rays
Of that hidden sun shall shine
On the floweret and the vine,
And again the meadow-springs
Fly away on misty wings;
But no glare of Fate adverse
Shall on us achieve its curse;
Never any baneful gleam
Waste our clear, perennial stream:
For its fountains lie below
That malign and ominous glow—
Lie in shadowy grottoes cool,

Where all kindly spirits rule ;
Calmly ever shall it flow
Toward the waters of the sea—
That serene Eternity !

TOO LATE.

CROUCH no more by the ivied walls,
Weep no longer over her grave,
Strew no flowers when evening falls :
Idly you lost what angels gave !

Sunbeams cover that silent mound
With a warmer hue than your roses' red ;
To-morrow's rain will bedew the ground
With a purer stream than the tears you shed.

But neither the sweets of the scattered flowers,
Nor the morning sunlight's soft command,
Nor all the songs of the summer showers,
Can charm her back from that distant land.

Tenderest vows are ever too late !
She, who has gone, can only know
The cruel sorrow that was her fate,
And the words that were a mortal woe.

Earth to earth, and a vain despair :
For the gentle spirit has flown away,
And you can never her wrongs repair,
Till ye meet again at the Judgment Day.

VOICE OF THE WESTERN WIND.

VOICE of the western wind!
Thou singest from afar,
Rich with the music of a land
Where all my memories are;
But in thy song I only hear
The echo of a tone,
That fell divinely on my ear
In days forever flown.

Star of the western sky!
Thou beamest from afar,
With lustre caught from eyes I knew,
Whose orbs were each a star;
But, oh, those eyes—too wildly bright—
No more eclipse thine own,
And never shall I find the light
Of days forever flown!

FLOOD-TIDE.

Just at sunrise, when the land-breeze cooled the
swooning air once more,
From a restless couch I wandered to the sounding
ocean shore ;

Strolling down through furrowed sand-hills, while the
splendor of the day
Flashed across the trembling waters to the West and far
away.

There I saw, in distant moorings, many an anchored
vessel tall ;
Heard with cheery morning voices sailor unto sailor
call.

Crowned with trailing plumes of sable, right athwart
my standing-place,
Moved a swarthy ocean-steamer, in her storm-resisting
grace.

Prophet-like, she clove the waters toward the ancient
mother-land,
And I heard her clamorous engine and the echo of
command,

While the long Atlantic billows to my feet came rolling
on,
With the multitudinous music of a thousand ages gone.

There I stood, with careless ankles half in sand and
half in spray,
Till the feverish mist of midnight from my being passed
away ;

Then, with eager inhalations opening all my mantle
wide,
Felt my spirit rise exultant with the rising of the tide ;

Felt the joyous morning breezes run afresh through
every vein,
Till the natural pulse of manhood beat the call-to-arms
again.

Then came utterance self-condemning—Oh, how wild
with sudden scorn
Of the chain that held me circling in a little round for-
lorn!

Of the sloth that, like a vapor, hugs the dull, insensate
heart,
That can act in meek submission to the lowness of its
part—

In the broad terrestrial drama play the herald or the
clown,
While the warrior wins his garlands and the monarch
wears his crown!

"Shame," I said, "upon the craven, who can rest, con-
tent to save

Paltry handful of the riches that his guardian-angel
gave !

Shame upon all listless dreamers early hiding from the
strife,
Sated with some little gleanings of the harvest-fields of
life !

Shame upon God's toiling thinkers, who make profit of
their brains,
Getting store of scornful pittance for their slow-decaying
pains !

Give me Action, endless Action, and the grandeur of a
soul
Born to lead the van of armies or a people to
control.

Let me float away and ever, from this shore of bog and
mire,
On the mounting waves of Effort, buoyed by the soul's
desire !

Would that it were mine to govern yon large wonder
of our time :

Such a life were worth the living ! thus to sail through
every clime,

From a hundred spicy shorelands bearing treasures
manifold ;

Foremost to achieve discovery of the peerless lands of
gold ;

Or to thrid the crashing hummocks for the silent
Northern Pole,

And those solemn open waters that beyond the ice-
plains roll.

Cold and shining sea of ages ! like a silver fillet set,
On the Earth's eternal forehead, for her bridal coronet.

Or to close with some tall frigate, for my country and
the right,

Gunwale grinding into gunwale through the rolling
cloud of fight.

When the din of cannonading and the jarring war
should cease,
From the lion's mouth of battle there should flow the
sweets of peace.

I should count repose in cities from my seventy years a
loss—
Resting only on the waters, like the dusk-winged alba-
tross.

I should lay the wire-wrought cable—a ghostly depth
below—
Along the marly summit of the plummet-found
plateau;

To the old Antipodes with the olive branch should
roam,
Joining swart Mongolian races to the ranks of Chris-
tendom.

Oftentimes our stately presence in a tyrant's port should
save

Captives, rash in freedom-loving, from the dungeon and
the grave ;

And a hymn should greet our coming, far across the
orient sea,
Like the glad apostles' anthem, when an angel set them
free.

Such the nobler life heroic ! life which ancient Homer
sung
Of the sinewy Grecian worthies, when the blithesome
Earth was young,

And a hundred marvellous legends lay about the misty
land,
Where the wanton Sirens carolled and the cliffs of
Scylla stand.

How their lusty strokes made answer, when Ulysses
held the helm,
And with subtle words of wisdom spake of many a
wondrous realm !

Not the amorous Circean languor of enchanted nights
and days

Soothed their eager-eyed disquiet—tamed their ventu-
rous, epic ways ;

And the dread Cyclopean monster, on the wild Sicilian
shore,

Felt the shadow of their coming and was blind for
evermore.

So lived all those stalwart captains of the loyal Saxon
blood,

Grasping morsels of adventure as an eagle grasps his
food ;

Fought till death for queen and country—hating Anti-
christ and Spain ;

Sacked the rich Castilian cities of the glittering western
main ;

Hacked and hewed the molten idols of each gray
cathedral pile,

And with Carthaginian silver dowered the virgin English isle.

Up and down the proud Antilles still the ringing echoes go :

Ho ! a Raleigh !—Ho ! a Drake !—and, forever,
WESTWARD Ho !

Why should not my later psœan catch the swell of that refrain,

And, with bursts of fresh endeavor, send it down the age again !

But I know, that, while the mariner wafts along the golden year,

Broader continents of action open up in every sphere.

And I deem those noble also, who, with strong persuasive art,

Strike the chords of aspiration in a people's lyric heart.

If in mine, of all republics the Atlantis and supreme,

There be little cause for mouthing on the old, undying
theme—

Yet I falter while I say it :—ours of every crime the
worst !

For the long revenge of Heaven crying loud and calling
first :

But if fiery Carolina and all the sensual South,
Like the world before the deluge, laugh to scorn the
warning mouth,—

In the lap of hoary Europe lie her children ill at rest,
Reaching hands of supplication to their brethren of
the West ;

Pale about the lifeless fountain of their ancient free-
dom, wait
Till the angel move its waters and avenge their stricken
state.

Let me then, a new crusader to the eastward set my face ;

Wake the fires of old tradition on each sacred altar-
place,

Till a trodden people rouse them, with a clamor as
divine

As the winds of autumn roaring through the clumps of
forest-pine.

I myself would seize their banner; they should follow
where it led,

To the triumph of the victors or the pallor of the
dead.

It were better than to conquer—from the light of life
to go

With such words as once were uttered, off the isle of
Floreo :

*Here die I, Sir Richard Grenville, of a free and joyful
mood :*

*Ending earth for God and honor, as a valiant soldier
should !*

But my present life—what is it? mated, housed like
other men :

Thoughtful of the cost of feeding, valiant only with the
pen ;

Lying, walled about with custom, on an iron bed of
creeds ;

Peering out through grated windows at the joy my
spirit needs.

And I hear the sound of chanting—mailed men are
passing by ;

Crumble walls, and loosen, fetters ! I will join them, ere
I die !”



So the sleeping thoughts of boyhood oped their eyes
and newly stirred,

And my muscles cried for usage, till the man their
plainings heard :

While the star, that lit me ever in the dark and thorny
ways,

Mine by natal consecration, by the choice of after
days—

Seen through all the sorrow thickening round the hopes
of younger years,

Rayless grew, and left me groping in the valley of my
tears.

Seaward now the steamer hovered; seaward far her
pennons trailed,

Where the blueness of the heavens at the clear horizon
paled;

Where the mingled sky and water faded into fairy-
land,

Smaller than her tiny model, deftly launched from child-
hood's hand.

With a statelier swell and longer, up the glaxis of the
shore,

Came the waves that leapt so freshly in their youth, an
hour before.

So I made an end and, turning, reached a scallop-crested
rock,
In the stormy spring-tides hurling back the tumult of
their shock.

There reclining, gazed a moment at the pebbles by my
feet,
Left behind the billowy armies on their oceanward
retreat;

Thousands lying close together, where the hosts a pas-
sage wore,
Many-hued, and tessellated in a quaint mosaic
floor.

Thinking then upon their fitness—each adjusted to its
place,
Fairly strewn, and smoothed by Nature with her own
exceeding grace,

All at once some unseen warder drew the curtains wide
 apart,
That awhile had cast their shadow on the picture of
 my heart;

And the whisper of an Angel—ah, the cadence of that
 voice!
Bade me not forget the guerdon of my earlier, dearer
 choice :

Told me—"Thou thyself hast said it: in thy calling
 be of cheer :
Broader continents of action open up in every sphere !

"Hold thy lot as great as any : each shall magnify his
 own,
Each shall find his time to enter, though unheralded and
 lone,

"On the inner life's arena—there to sound his battle-cry
Self with self in secret tourney, underneath the silent
 sky.

“Strong of faith in that mute umpire, some have conquered, and withstood
All the pangs of long endurance—the dear pains of fortitude;

“Felt a harsh misapprehension gall the wounds of martyrdom;
In the present rancor measured even the scorn of days to come;

“Known that never should the whiteness of their virtue shine revealed,
Never should the truer Future rub the tarnish from the shield.

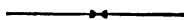
“That diviner abnegation hath not yet been asked of thee;
Art thou able to attain it, if perchance it were to be?

“O, our feeble tests of greatness! Look for one so calm of soul,

As to take the even chalice of his life and drink the whole.

“Noble deeds are held in honor, but the wide world sorely needs

Hearts of patience to unravel this, the worth of common deeds.”



As the darkened earth forever to the morning turns again;

As the dreaming soldier, after all the perilous campaign,

Struggling long with horse and rider, in his sleep smites fiercely out,

And, with sudden pang awaking, through the darkness peers about—

Hearing but the crickets chirrup loud, beneath his chimney-stone,

Feeling but the warm heart throbbing, in the form
beside his own;

Then to knowledge of his hamlet, dearer for the toil
he knows,
Comes at last, content to nestle in the sweets of his
repose;

So fell I, from those high fancies, to the quiet of a
heart
Knowing well how Duty maketh each one's share the
better part;

And these sayings, old and homely, by the sounding
ocean-shore,
Filled me with a pleased quiescence in the meaning
which they bore.

Looking once again about me—North and South, and
East and West—
Now of all the wide world over still my haven seemed
the best.

Calm, and slowly lifting upward, rose the eastern glory
higher,
Gilding sea, and shore, and vessel, and the city-crown-
ing spire.

Then the sailors shook their canvass to the dryness of
the sun,
And along the harbor-channel glided schooners, one
by one.

At the last I sought my cottage; there, before the
garden gate,
By the lilac, stood my darling, looking for her truant
mate.

Stooping at the porch, we entered;—where the morn-
ing meal was laid,
Turning over holy pages, one as pure and holy
played—

Little Paul, who links more firmly our two hearts than
clasp of gold;

And I caught a blessed sentence, while I took him
to my hold:

"Peace," it said, "O restless spirit, eager as the climbing wave!

With my peace there flows a largesse such as monarchs
never gave."

1857.

APOLLO.

VAINLY, O burning Poets!

Ye wait for his inspiration,

Even as kings of old

Stood by the oracle-gates.

Hasten back, he will say, *hasten back*

To your provinces far away!

There, at my own good time,

Will I send my answer to you.

Are ye not kings of song?

At last the God cometh!

The air runs over with splendor:

The fire leaps high on the altar;

Melodious thunders shake the ground.

Hark to the Delphic responses!

Hark! it is the God!

THE SLEIGH-RIDE.

HARK ! the jingle
Of the sleigh-bells' song !
Earth and air in snowy sheen commingle ;
Swiftly throng
Norseland fancies, as we sail along.

Like the maiden
Of some fairy-tale,
Lying, spell-bound, in her diamond-laden
Bridal veil,
Sleeps the Earth beneath a garment pale.

High above us
Gleams the ancient moon—
Gleam the eyes of shining ones that love us ;
Could their tune
Only fill our ears at heaven's noon,

You and I, love,
With a wild delight,
Hearing that seraphic strain would die, love,
This same night,
Straight to join them in their starry height!

Closer nestle,
Dearest, to my side :
What enchantment, in our magic vessel
Thus to glide,
Making music, on a silver tide!

Jingle! jingle!
How the fields go by!
Earth and air in snowy sheen commingle
Far and nigh;
Is the ground beneath us, or the sky?

Heavenward yonder,
In the lurid North,
From Valhalla's gates that roll asunder,
Red and wroth,
Balder's funeral flames are blazing forth.

O, what splendor ;
How the hues expire !
All the elves of light their tribute render
To the pyre !
Clad in robes of gold and crimson fire.

Softly fusing,
Every color rare,
Half its own prismatic brilliance losing,
Grows more fair,
Blending with the lunar glory there ;

Even so, love,
All my yearning heart
In ethereal passion is aglow, love,
And thine art
To its hues new lustre shall impart.

Jingle ! jingle !
Let the Earth go by !
With a wilder thrill our pulses tingle ;
You and I
Will shout our loves, but aye forget to sigh !

THE FRESHET.

A NEW ENGLAND IDYL.

LAST August, of a three weeks' country tour,
Five dreamy days were passed amid old elms
And older mansions, and in leafy dales,
That knew us, till our elders pushed us forth
To larger life—as eagles push their young,
New-fledged and wondering, from the eyrie's edge,
To cater for themselves.

I fell in, there,
With Gilbert Ripley, once my chum at Yale.
Poor Gilbert groaned along a double year—
Read, spoke, boxed, fenced, rowed, trod the foot-ball
ground—

Loving the college library more than Greek,
His meerschaum most of all. But when we came
Together, gathered from the breathing-time
They give the fellows while the dog-days last,
He found the harness chafe; then grew morose,
And kicked above the traces—going home,
Hardly a Junior, but a sounder man,
In mind and body, than a host, who win
Your baccalaureate honors. There he stayed,
Half tired of bookmen, on his father's farm,
And gladly felt the plough-helve. In a year
The old man gave his blessing to the son,
And left his life, as 'twere his harvest field,
When work was over. Gilbert hugged the farm,
Now made his own, besides a pretty sum
In good State Sixes; partly worked the land,
With separate theories for every field,
And partly led the student-life of old,
Mouthing his Shakspeare's ballads to himself
Among the meadow-mows; or, when he read
I' the evening, found a picture of his bull,
Just brought from Devon, sleek as silk, loom in

Before his vision. Thus he weighed his tastes,
Each against each, in happiest equipoise.
The neighbor farmers seeing he had thrift
That would not run to waste, and pardoning all
Beyond their understanding, wished him well.

But when I saw him stride among his stock—
Straight-shouldered cattle, breathing of the field—
Saw him how blowze and hearty; then, at eve,
Close sitting by his mother in the porch,
Heard him discuss the methods of the times,
The need our country has of stalwart men,
Who scorn the counter and will till the land,
Strong-handed, free of thought—I somehow felt
The man was noble, and his simple life
More like the pattern given in the Mount,
Than mine, hedged close about with city life,
And grim, conventional manners.

So much, then,
For Gilbert Ripley. Not to dwell too long
Upon his doings, let me tell the tale

I got from him, one hazy afternoon,
When he and I had wandered to the bridge,
New-built across our favorite of the streams
That skirt the village—here three miles apart,
Twin currents, joining in a third below.

There memory's shallop bore us trancedly,
Through changeful windings, to the long, long days
Of June vacations. How we boys would thrid
The amorous alders at the water's edge,
Conjecturing forward, though the Present lay
Like Eden round us; for the Future shone—
The sun to which each young heart turned for light!
What wild conceits of great, oracular lives,
Ourselves would equal! but let that go by:
Each has gone by, in turn, to humbler fates.
Sometimes we angled, and our trolling hooks
Swung the gray pickerel from his reedy shoals.
Beyond a horse-shoe bend, the current's force
Wore out a deeper channel, where the shore
Fell off, precipitous, on the western side.
There dove the bathers; there I learned to swim—

Flung far into the middle stream, by one
Who watched my gaspings, laughing, till my limbs,
Half of themselves, struck out, and held me up.
Far down, a pile-drove dam, from bank to bank,
Shut back the waters, in a shadowy lake,
About a mimic island. Languidly
The chesnuds still infoliate its space,
And still the whispering flags are intertwined
With whitest water-lilies near the marge.
Close by, the paper-mill, with murmurous wheel,
Still glistens through the branches, while its score
Of laughing maidens throng the copse at noon.

But we, with careless arms upon the rail,
Peered through and through the water; almost

saw

Its silvery Naiads, from their wavering depths,
Gleam with strange faces upward; almost heard
Sweet voices carol: "Ah, you all come back!
We charm your childhood; then you roam away,
To float on alien waters, like the winds;
But, ah, you all come back—come dreaming back!

At last I broke the silence : " See," I said
To Gilbert, " see how fair our dear old stream !
The affluent West irradiates its length,
While underneath the darkness of these piers
It eddies in and out, and cools itself
In slumbrous ripples whispering husht repose."

But he made answer : " Yes, this August day,
The wave is summer-charmed—the fields are hazed ;
But in the callow Spring, when Easter winds
Are on us, laden with rain, these fickle streams—
More gentle now than in his cradled sleep
Some Alexander—take up arms, spread wide,
Leap high and cruel in a fierce campaign
Along their valleys. See this trellised bridge,
New-built, and firmer than the one from which
We fellows dropt the line :—*that* went away
Two years ago, like straw before a gale,
In the great April flood, of which you heard,
When George and Lucy Dorrance lost their lives.
I saw them perish. You remember her—
She that was Lucy Hall—a darling girl,

The fairest of our schoolmates, with a heart
Light as her smile and fastened all upon
The boy that won her ; yet her glances fell
Among us, right and left, like shooting stars
In clear October nights when winds are still.

“That year our Equinoctial came along
Ere the snow left us. Under mountain pines
White drifts lay frozen like the dead, and down
Through many a gorge, the sentinel savins crost
Their spears above the ice-enfettered brooks ;
But the pent river wailed, through prison walls,
For freedom and the time to rend its chains.
At last it came : five days a drenching rain
Flooded the country ; snow-drifts fell away ;
The brooks grew rivers, and the river here—
A ravenous angry torrent—tore up banks,
And overflowed the meadows, league on league.
Great cakes of ice, four-square, with mounds of hay,
Fence-rails and scattered drift-wood, and huge beams
From broken dams above us—mill-wheel ties,
Smooth lumber, and the torn up trunks of trees,

Swept downward, strewing all the land about.
Sometimes the flood surrounded, unawares,
Stray cattle, or a flock of timorous sheep,
And bore them with it, struggling, till the ice
Beat shape and being from them. You know how
These freshets scour our valleys. So it raged
A night and day; but when the day grew night
The storm fell off; lastly, the sun went down,
Quite clear of clouds, and ere he came again
The flood began to lower.

“Through the rise
We men had been at work, like water-sprites,
Lending a helping hand to cottagers
Along the lowlands. Now, at early morn,
The banks were sentry-lined with thrifty swains,
Who haled great store of drift-wood up the slope.
But toward the bridge our village maidens soon
Came flocking, thick as swallows after storms,
When, with light wing, they skim the happy fields
And greet the sunshine. Danger mostly gone,
They watched the thunderous passage of the flood

Between the abutments, while the upper stream,
Far as they saw, lay like a seething strait,
From hill to hill. Below, with gradual fall
Through narrower channels, all was clash and clang
And inarticulate tumult. Through the boles
Of yonder grove, now far above the wave,
Where once we held our feasts—empanoplied
With coolest shade—the furious-driving tide
Struck a new channel, and the craggy ice
Scored down its saplings. Following with the rest
Came George and Lucy, not three honey-moons
Made man and wife, and happier than a pair
Of cooing ring-doves in the early June.

“Two piers bore up the middle of the bridge,
Cleaving the current, wedge-like, on the North ;
Between them stood our couple, intergrouped
With many others. On a sudden loomed
An immolating terror from above—
A floating field of ice, where fifty cakes
Had clung together, mingled with a mass
Of debris from the upper conflict—logs

Woven in with planks and fence-rails—and, in front,
One huge, old, fallen trunk rose like a wall
Athwart the channel. Then arose a cry
From all who saw it, clamoring—*Flee the bridge!*
Run shoreward for your lives!—and all made haste,
Eastward and Westward, till they felt the ground
Stand firm beneath them; but, with close-locked arms,
Lucy and George still looked, from the lower rail,
Toward the promontory where we stood,
Nor saw the death, nor seemed to hear the cry.
Run George! run Lucy! shouted all at once:
Too late—too late—for, with resistless crash,
Across both piers that mighty ruin lay
A space that seemed an hour, yet far too short
For rescue. Swaying slowly back and forth,
With ponderous tumult, all the bridge went off;
Piers, beams, planks, railings, snapt their groaning ties
And fell asunder!

“But the middle part,
Wrought with great bolts of iron, like a raft
Bore up awhile, whirled onward in the wreck

This way and that, and washed with freezing spray.
Faster than I can tell you, it came down
Beyond our point, and in a flash we saw
George, on his knees, close-clinging for dear life—
One arm around the remnant of the rail,
One clasping Lucy. We were pale as they,
Powerless to save; but even as they swept
Across the bend, and twenty stalwart men
Ran to and fro with clamor for *A rope!*
A boat!—their cries together reached the shore:
Save her! Save him!—so true Love conquers all.
Furlongs below they still more closely held
Each other, 'mid a thousand shocks of ice
And seething horrors; till, at last, the end
Came, where the river, scornful of its bed,
Struck a new channel, roaring through the grove;
There, dashed against a naked beech that stood
Grimly in front, their shattered raft gave up
Its precious charge—and then a mist of tears
Blinded all eyes, through which we seemed to see
Two forms in death-clasp whirled along the flood,
And all was over.

“ But from out the crowd
Certain went up the lane, and broke the news
To Lucy’s widowed mother ; she spoke not,
Nor wept, nor murmured, but with stony glare
Took in her loss, like Niobe, and to bed
Moved stolidly and never rose again.
Old farmer Dorrance gave a single groan,
And hurried down among us—all the man,
Though white with anguish—as we took our course
Around the meadows, searching for the dead.

“ An eddying gulf ran up the hither bank,
Close by the paper-mill, and there the flood
Gave back its booty ; there we found them laid,
Covered with floating leaves and twigs of trees,
Not many feet apart—so Love’s last clasp
Held lingeringly, until the cruel ice
Battered its fastenings. On a rustic bier,
Made of loose boughs and strewn with winter ferns,
We placed them, side by side, and bore them home.
But now the old man, following by himself,
Wrung his thin hands and bowed his head in tears.”

So Gilbert told his story ; I, meanwhile,
Followed his finger's pointing, as it marked
Each spot he mentioned, like an usher's wand.
But now the sun hung low : from many a field
The loitering kine went home with tinkling bells.
Slow-turning, toward the farm we made our way,
And met a host of maidens, merry-eyed,
Whom I knew not, yet caught a frequent glance
I seemed to know, that half-way brought to mind
Sweet eyes I loved to watch in school-boy days—
Sweet sister-eyes to those that glistened now.

SONNETS.

"HOPE DEFERRED MAKETH THE HEART SICK."

BRING no more flowers and books and precious things !
O speak no more of our beloved Art,
Of summer haunts—melodious wanderings
In leafy refuge from this weary mart :
Surely such thoughts were dear unto my heart ;
Now every word a newer sadness brings !
Thus oft some forest-bird, caged far apart
From verdurous freedom, droops his careless wings,
Nor craves for more than food from day to day ;
So long bereft of wildwood joy and song,
Hopeless of all he dared to hope so long—
The music born within him dies away :
Even the song he loved becomes a pain,
Full-freighted with a longing all in vain.

MAY: 1859.

THE meadow-wooling Spring doth not forget
To smile upon our toilsome city squares,
Though men perceive her not—like schoolboys set
To daily tasks, and bent with life-long cares;
Yet, even in our thralldom, have we met
The light of bluer than the winter sky
At office-windows—something freer yet,
Than lately breathed, in zephyrs passing by;
Aye, and in yon walled church-yard can espy
Green rustling branches:—O to be away!
To list the birds sing and the breezes sigh
In well remembered valleys! Thou and I,
Dear Love, would roam once more a truant day,
Living as we were wont to live in May.

A MOTHER'S PICTURE.

SHE seemed an angel to our infant eyes!
Once, when the glorifying moon revealed
Her who at evening by our pillow kneeled—
Soft-voiced and golden-haired, from holy skies
Flown to her loves on wings of Paradise—
We looked to see the pinions half-concealed.
The Tuscan vines and olives will not yield
Her back to me, who loved her in this wise,
And since have little known her, but have grown
To see another mother, tenderly,
Watch over sleeping darlings of my own;
Perchance the years have changed her : yet alone
This picture lingers : still she seems to me
The fair, young Angel of my infancy.

ITALY.

BEYOND the blue Atlantic lifts a land,
In many a vineyard terrace, from the sea,
And not alone those waters, lovingly,
Roll toward her, but every freeman's hand
Points thitherward, to cheer the noble band,
Whose flowing blood shall make this fair land free :
For, like a precious casket, Italy,
Set round with jewelled memories doth stand—
Full of her thousand gems of Art and Song.
But, Italy, for me thou dost contain
Three treasures richer than are said to throng
Thine Angelo's or Raffael's richest vein :
Mother and Sisters ! unto you belong
My heart, and all the passion of this strain.

CHRISTMAS : 1857.

CLOSE on the ending of a doleful year,
Sweet Christmas chimes and carollings, awhile,
With blessed reminiscences, beguile
Men's restless hearts and soothe away their fear;
Ah, then! from Heaven looking to our sphere,
Which He alone to Heaven could reconcile,
Our Lord, amid His perfect joy, doth smile
To see—wherever men such music hear—
All human sufferers, on this dear morn,
When into human life He erst was born,
Forget their ancient curse and myriad woes,
Feeling the bliss that some fair planet knows,
Where never entered Sin, and Doubt, and Scorn,
To bring the need of a Redeemer's throes.

THE ORDEAL BY FIRE.

To many a one there comes a day
So black with maledictions, they
Hide every earthly hope away.

In earlier woes the sufferer bore,
Consolement entered at his door,
And raised him gently from the floor.

To this great anguish, newly come,
All former sorrows, in their sum,
Were but a faint exordium.

His days and nights are full of groans :
Sorely, and with a thousand moans,
For many wanderings he atones.

Old errors, vauquished for a space,
Rise up to smite him in the face
And threaten him with new disgrace.

And others, shadows of the first,
From slanderous charnel-houses burst,
Pursuing, cry—*Thou art accurst!*

Dear, feeble voices ask for bread :
The dross, for which he bowed his head
So long, hath taken wings and fled.

The strong resources of his health
Have softly slipt away by stealth :
No future toil may bring him wealth.

Dreading the shadow of his shame,
False friends, who with the sunshine came,
Forego the mention of his name.

Thus on a fiery altar tost,

The harvests of his life are lost
In one consuming holocaust.

What can he, but to beat the air,
And, from the depth of his despair,
Cry "Is there respite anywhere?"

"Is Life but Death? Is God unjust?"
Shall all the castle of my trust
Dissolve and crumble into dust?"

There are, who, with a wild desire
For slumber, blinded by the fire,
Sink in its ashes and expire.

God pity them! too harsh a test
Hath made them falter; sore distress,
They barter everything for rest.

But many, of a sterner mould,
Themselves within themselves infold,
Even make Death unloose his hold—

Although it were a grateful thing
To drain the cup his heralds bring,
And yield them to his ransoming ;

To quaff the calm, Lethean wave :
In passionless tenure of the grave
Forgetting all they could not save.

What angels hold them up, among
The ruins of their lives, so long ?
What visions make their spirits strong ?

In sackcloth, at the outer gate,
They chant the burden of their fate,
Yet are not wholly desolate.

A blessed ray from darkness won
It may be, even, to know the sun
Hath distant lands he shines upon ;

It may be that they deem it vile

For one to mount his funeral pile,
Because the heavens cease to smile ;

That scorn of cowardice holds fast,
Lighting the forehead to the last,
Though all of bravery's hopes are past.

Perchance the sequence of an Art
Leads to a refuge for the heart,
A sanctuary far apart.

It may be that, in darling eyes,
They see the light of azure skies,
And keep their faith in Paradise.

Thou, who dost feel Life's vessel strand
Full-length upon the shifting sand,
And hearest breakers close at hand,

Be strong and wait ! nor let the strife,
With which the winds and waves are rife,
Disturb that sacred inner life :

Anon thou shalt regain the shore,
And walk—though naked, maimed, and sore—
A nobler being than before !

No lesser griefs shall work thee ill :
No malice shall have power to kill :
Of woe thy soul hath drunk its fill.

Tempests, that beat us to the clay,
Drive many a lowering cloud away,
And bring a clearer, holier day.

The fire, that every hope consumes,
Either the inmost soul entombs
Or evermore the face illumines !

Robes of asbestos do we wear ;
Before the memories we bear,
The flames leap backward everywhere.

THE PROTEST OF FAITH.

TO REV. ———.

DEAR Friend and Teacher—not by word alone,
But by the plenteous virtues shining out
Along the zodiac of a good man's life :
Dear gentle friend ! from one so loved as you,
Because so loving, and so finely apt
In tender ministry to a little flock,
With whom you joy and suffer . . . and, withal,
So constant to the spirit of our time,
That I must hold you of a different sort
From those dry lichens on the altar steps—
Those mutes in surplices, school-trained to sink
The ashes of their own experience
So low, in doctrinal catacombs, that none

Find token they can love and mourn like us :
From such an one as you, I cannot brook
What from these mummies were a pleasant draught
Of bitter hyssop—pleasant unto me,
Drunk from a chalice worthier men have held
And emptied to the lees.

I cannot brook
The shake o' the head and earnest, sorrowing glance,
Which often seem to say :—"Be wise in time !
Give up the iron key that locks your heart :
I grant you charity, and patient zeal,
And something of a young, romantic love
For what is good, as children love the fields
And birds and babbling brooks, they know not why.
You have your moral virtues, but you err :
To err is fatal :—O, my heart is faint,
Lest that sweet prize I win should not be yours !"

In some such wise I read your half-dropt thoughts ;
Yet wondrous compensation falls to all,
And every soul hath strongholds of its own,

Invisible, yet answering to its needs.
And even I may have a secret tower
Up storm-cleft Pisgah, whence I see beyond
Jordan, and far across the happy plains,
Where gleams the Holy City, like a queen,
The crown of all our hopes and perfect faith.
I may have gone somewhat within the veil,
Though few repose serenely in the light
Of that divinest splendor, till they shine,
With countenance aglow, like him of old—
Prophet and priest and warrior, all in one.
But every human path leads on to God :
He holds a myriad finer threads than gold,
And strong as holy wishes, drawing us
With delicate tension upward to Himself;
You see the strand that reaches down to you :
Haply I see mine own, and make essay
To trace its glimmerings—up the shadowy hills
Forever narrowing to that unknown sky.

There grows a hedge about you pulpit-folk :
You reason *ex cathedra* : little gain

Have we to clash in tourney on the least
Of points, wherewith you trammel down the Faith,
It being, at outset, understood right well
By lay knights-errant, that their Reverend foes,
Fore-pledged to hold their own, will sound their trumps,
Though spearless and unhorsed! Why take the field,
When, at the best, both sides go bowing off
With mutual courtesy, and fair white flags
Afloat at camp—and every game is drawn?
As soon encounter statues, balanced well
Upon their granite, fashioned not to move,
And drawing all mankind to hold in awe
Their grim persistence.

If, indeed, I sin,
In counting somewhat freely on that Love
From which, through rolling ages, worlds have sprung,
And—last and best of all—the lords of worlds,
Through type on type uplifted from the clay;
If I have been triumphant in the thought
That such humanity came so near to God,
He held us as His children, and would find

Imperial progress through the halls of Time
For every soul ;—why, then, my crescent faith
Clings round the promise ; if it spread beyond,
You think, too far, I say that Peter sprang
Upon the waves of surging Galilee,
While all the eleven hugged the ship in fear :
The waters were as stone unto his feet
Until he doubted : even then the Christ
Put forth a blessed hand, and drew him on
To closer knowledge !

So, if it be mine
First of us twain to pass the sable gates,
That guard so well their mysteries, and thou,
With some dear friend, may'st stand beside my grave,
Speak no such words as these :—" Not long ago
His voice rang out as cheerly as mine own ;
And we were friends—and, far into the nights,
Would analyze the wisdom of old days
By all the tests of Science in her prime ;
Anon would tramp afield, to fruits and flowers,
And the long prototypes of trees and beasts

Graven in sandstone ; so, at last, would come,
Through lanes of talk, to that perennial tree—
The Tree of Life, on which redemption hangs ;
But there fell out of tune ; we parted there,
He bolstering up a creed too broad for me !
I held him kindly for an ardent soul,
Who lacked not skill to make his vagaries
Seem fair and specious. But he groped in Doubt :
His head and heart were young ; he wandered off,
And fell afoul of all those theorists,
Who soften down our dear New England faith
With German talk of 'Nature,' 'inner lights
And harmonies : ' so, taken with the wind
Of those high-sounding terms, he spoke at large,
And held discussion bravely till he died.
Here sleep his ashes ; where his soul may be,
Myself, who loved him, do not care to think."

The ecstasy of Faith hath no such fears
As those you nurse for me ! The marvellous love,
Which folds the systems in a flood of light,
Makes no crude works to shatter out of joint

Through all the future. O, believe, with me,
For every instinct in these hearts of ours
A full fruition hastens ! O, believe
That promise greater than our greatest trust
And loftiest aspiration ! Tell thy friend,
Beside my grave : " He did the best he could,
With earnest spirit polishing the lens,
By which he took the Heavens in his ken,
And through the empyræan sought for God ;
He caught, or thought he caught, from time to time,
Bright glimpses of the Infinite, on which
He fed in rapturous and quiet joy,
That helped him keep a host of troubles down.
He went his way—a different path from mine ;
But took his place among the ranks of men
Who toil and suffer. If, in sooth, it be
Religion keeps us up, this man had that.
God grant his yearnings were a living Faith !
Heaven lies above us : may we find him there
Beside the waters still, and crowned with palms !"

EARLY POEMS.

The Rime of the Elle-King.

"Under the greenwood tree,
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather."

AS YOU LIKE IT.

THE RIME OF THE ELLE-KING.

I.

Long years ago, in idle greenwood time,
When fairies tript it merrily on the toe,
With roundels gay and many a tinkling rhyme;
When wrinkled hags their sorcery muttered low,
And forms of evil flitted to and fro
In dark attendance on the magic spell;
When woods were elfin-haunted—long ago—
An aged good-wife dwelt within a dell
The loveliest of Lorraine—romantic Epinel.

II.

Her cottage was enwreathed luxuriously
With flowering lilac and sweet jessamine,
And by its step there grew a linden-tree,
Deckt all about with thorny eglantine ;
Two loving willows strove to intertwine
Their yellow branches—pendulous among
Its straw-thatched gables—with the fragrant vine ;
A joyous brook, with gushing, wildwood song,
Flowed aye between their gnarl'd and earth-black roots
along.

III.

Above the low and diamond-latticed door
An oaken cross was hung—that whoso stept,
Howbeit by chance, upon the cottage floor,
Its silent benediction might accept ;
Before it oft Ursula prayed, and wept—
Though lorn of goodman and each darling son—
In pious joy, as not yet quite bereft,
With one fair daughter, spared to soothe her moan,
And dearer to her heart than all those dear ones gone.

IV.

For Marguerite her every want supplied,
And stayed with care her tottering steps and
faint;
And oft Ursula trudged along beside
The maiden, seeming little else than saint,
With silvery tresses flowing down her quaint
Provençal habit—waited on in love
By ministering seraph without taint;
Or, in some strange acquaintance interwove,
A grey, old falcon-hawk beside a mild-eyed dove.

V.

Ah, Marguerite, sweet pearl of Epinel!
Fair lily of Lorraine!—how should it fade,
And vanish quite from that enamored dell!
All living creatures loved the little maid,
At her own mirrored beauty half affrayed;
To whose clear eyes the faun and satyr-kind,
And dryad wood-nymphs, rural homage paid;
And then how tunelessly her eager mind
To legends old and tales of romance was inclined!

VI.

For at Ursula's footstool would she kneel,
With frequent sigh and tremulous heart's delight,
To list how royal Guinevere did steal
Away with Launcelot—her own true knight;
Anon would shudder with bewitching fright,
When of dark goblins spake the ancient dame—
Of Roncesvalles and brave Orlando's fight;
But most of all she loved to hear the fame
Of Elf and Fairy, and the Elle-King's dreaded name.

VII.

The Elle-King, who—as every wrinkled dame
Throughout fair Epinel, with boding tongue,
Told the scared children, that around them came
Listening, with little hearts by terror wrung—
Held royal sway in Elfland, where were hung
Live fairy-harps on every orange bough,
Breathing wild music, and where, all among
The groves and rills and blossoms, whispering low,
Elf pledged his love to Fay in many a summer
vow;

VIII.

And who, they said, would oft in mortal guise,
Down in the vale, beneath the holly-tree,
On haunted nights appear to maidens' eyes,
And woo them with unearthly melody,
Until their souls would all entrancèd be
With shadowy forms of beauty, and they sighed
In Faëry-land forever amorously
To dwell, and be the Elle-King's stately bride :—
Saint Denis aid fair damsels when thus sorely tried !

IX.

For past redemption would that maiden be
Who, music-charmed, should yield her to the Fay !
Such ballads sang the dames continually,
And twirled the distaff through the live-long day ;
But Marguerite strayed thoughtfully away,
And often all the legend o'er would dream,
Whene'er at night she might forget to pray
To good saint Denis, or the silvery stream
Of moonlight on her couch shone in with ominous
gleam.

X.

And so forevermore her little heart
With young romance was easily beguiled :
Sometimes throughout the forest, far apart
From the wierd cottage, in the copses wild,
She sought for elfin grottoes, and then smiled,
And curled her dainty lip in high disdain,
To see herself so like a simple child !
But ah ! what longings nestled in her brain,
Like serpents twining round the Lily of Lorraine !

* * * *

XI.

It is the Hallow Eve, when elves have power
And dark enchantments fill the haunted air ;
When, through great castle-hall and ladye's bower,
White faces glimmer, dank with mildewed hair ;
And sickly will-o-wisp his fiendish glare
Throws, like a murderer's candle, through the mist,
While shrouded Evil watches everywhere ;
Ah ! the foul fiend is busy now, I wist,
And all the goblin imps his dismal spells assist !

XII.

What timorous damsel dares to wander through
The elfin glen on this ill-fated eve ?
Yet Margret will her venturous path pursue,
In spite of all that simple girls believe :
Though flutteringly her gentle breast may heave,
Darkling she hastens onward, while old dreams
A hundred pictures for her fancy weave,
And on her spectral form the fire-fly gleams
Through all the climbing fog, till like a ghost she seems ;

XIII.

A ghost of maiden, by false lover's sin
Heart-broken, and forever wandering where
The traitor did her brightest jewel win ;
And why doth Marguerite alone repair,
With robe of white and little ankles bare,
Through the witch-haunted valley ? Hear you
not
Saint Mary's chapel bell ? and see the glare
Of waxen taper, in the holy spot,
Where all but pious vow and penance is forgot.

XIV.

Thither she turns her course mysteriously,
And thither to our Lady fain would pray,
That, on this night, in great benignity,
All spells and demons she will guard away
From her dear cottage, till the breaking day
Upon Ursula and herself shall glow;
With such kind purpose, in her pure array
She hurries forth—but ah! she needs must go
Past the great holly-oak o'er-clomb with mistletoe.

XV.

Saint Mary be her guardian! for see,
What sudden radiance beacons through the ferns,
Of flame intense, and colored variously
As that which in some perfumed censer burns!
Boding the antique legend, Margret yearns,
In all her terror, with a strange delight,
And slowly toward those drooping branches turns,
With half-way thrills of longing—half-affright—
As one who fears, yet pines, to view some ghostly
sight.

XVI.

What sees the maiden, that so fixed she stays ?
From what arch spell of elfin glamoury,
Bathed in the light of those bewildering rays,
In all her wonderment so loth to fly ?
For whom those parted lips—that passionate sigh ?
And see her now like Ariadne smile,
When her god-lover shone out splendidly
Before her eyes, and clasped her hand the while,
And told his love divine—in Naxos' dewy isle ;

XVII.

Smile at the vision of a youthful king,
With coronal of ocean-emerald crowned,
And amber hair, by many a gorgeous ring
Of wreathéd gold fantastically bound ;
'Mong all her peasant lovers, that around
The village-pole on merry-makings throng,
Such stately courtesy she has not found,
And beauty, which young maidens praise in song,
Or picture to their hearts in summer day-dreams
long.

XVIII.

And ah ! with pure, harmonious, dying notes,
More sweetly than the nightingale's sweet tune,
Which, mystically uttered, ever floats
Along the ether to the listening moon,
He prays of Marguerite a gentle boon,
That she to bannered Faëry-land will go,
And share with him the Elle-King's pearly throne ;
Soft, as on Danaë fell the golden snow,
Falls on her charmed ear the elfin music low !

Elfin Song.

1.

FAR in the western ocean's breast,
The summer fairies have found a nest ;
The heavens ever unclouded smile
Over the breadth of their beautiful isle ;
Through it a hundred streamlets flow,
In spangled paths, to the sea below,
And woo the vales, that beside them lie,
With a low and tremulous minstrelsy.
The elfin brood have homes they love

In the earth below and skies above ;
But the haunt, which of all they love the best,
Is the palm-crowned isle, in the ocean's breast,
That mortals call Canary ;
And many an Ariel, blithesome, airy,
And each laughing Fay and lithesome Fairy,
Know well the mystical way in the West
To the sweet isle of Canary.

2.

With an ever-sounding choral chant,
And a clear, cerulean, wild desire
To clasp that fairy-island nigher,
The sinuous waves of ocean pant ;
For here all natural things are free
To mingle in passionate harmony.
The light from their mirror turns away
With a golden splendor, in the day,
But nightly, when coronetted Even
Marshals the shining queen of heaven,
There gleams a silvery scenery,
From the rim of the great prismatic sea
Around the isle of Canary,
To the central crags of Pisgatiri,
Where the crested eagle builds his eyrie,
Scanning the shores of sweet Canary.

3.

Lustrously sailing here and there,
Afloat in the beatific air,
Birds, of purple and blue and gold,
Pour out their music manifold ;
All day long in the leas they sing,
While the sun-kist flowers are blossoming ;
At eve, when the dew-drop feeds the rose,
And the fragrant water-lilies close,
The marvellous-throated nightingale
With a dying music floods each vale,
Till the seaward breezes, listening, stay
To catch the harmony of his lay
 And cool the air of Canary ;
And thus the melodies ever vary,
In the vales of the ocean aviary,
 In the blissful valleys of sweet Canary.

4.

The Elle-King's palace was builded there
By elves of water and earth and air ;
Lovingly worked each loyal sprite,
And it grew to life in a summer night ;
It grew to life like a summer thought—
A fit abode for the monarch's court :
Over the sheen of its limpid moat,

Wafted along, in a magic boat,
By fairy wings that fan the sails,
And eddying through enchanted vales,
Through walls of amber and crystal gates,
We come where a fairy-warder waits ;
And so, by many a winding way
Where sweet bells jingle and fountains play,
To the inmost, royalest room of all—
The elfin monarch's reception-hall,

 The pearl and pride of Canary !
To guard its fastness the elves are wary,
And no wierd thing, of pleasure chary,
 Can enter with evil in sweet Canary !

5.

All that saddens, and care and pain,
Are banished far from that fair domain ;
There forever, by day and night,
Is nought but pleasance and Love's delight ;
Daily, the Genii of the flowers
Shade with beauty a hundred bowers ;
Nightly, the Gnomes of precious stones
Emblazon and light a hundred thrones :
And the Elves of the field, so swift and mute,
Bring wine and honey and luscious fruit ;
And the Sylphs of the air, at noontide, cool

The depths of each bower and vestibule ;
And all are gay—from the tricksome Fay,
Who flutters in woodlands far away,
To the best-beloved attendant Elf,
And the royal heart of the King himself,
 Who rules in bright Canary ;
And the laboring Fairies are blithe and merry,
Who press the juice from the swollen berry
 That reddens the vines of sweet Canary.

6.

What if there be a fated day
When the Faëry Isle shall pass away,
And its beautiful groves and fountains seem
The myths of a long, delicious dream !
A century's joys shall first repay
Our hearts, for the evil of that day ;
And the Elfin-King has sworn to wed
A daughter of Earth, whose child shall be,
By cross and water hallowéd,
From the fairies' doom forever free :
What if there be a fated day !
It is far away ! it is far away !
Maiden, fair Maiden : I, who sing
Of this summer isle, am the island King ;
I come from its joys to make thee mine :

Half of my kingdom shall be thine :
Our horses of air and ocean wait—
Then hasten, and share the Elle-King's state
 In the sweet isle of Canary ;
And many an Ariel, blithesome, airy,
And each laughing Fay and lithesome Fairy,
Shall rovingly hover around and over thee,
And the love of a king shall evermore cover thee,
 Nightly and daily in sweet Canary.

XIX.

The wizard song is dying amorously,
And Marguerite, by music's wondrous spell
Enwrapt in more than mortal ecstasy,
Forgets her home, nor heeds the chapel bell
That tolls for restless souls a piteous knell,
But, open-mouthed, with pallid, suppliant hands,
Seems trembling with a longing naught may quell ;
Then all amort, like carvéd marble, stands,
And pants for summer bowers and joy in faëry-lands.

XX.

Now instant let her guardian angel charm

Her love-lorn soul from that wierd minstrelsy,
And kind Saint Denis, with protecting arm,
Speed to her aid—or else the linden-tree
Will never shade her more, and she will be
A prisoned bird in gilded cage forlorn!
And look! with white arms reaching languidly
Toward that perilous beauty, she has gone
Yet nearer to the Fay—the elfin charm has won!

XXI.

Good bye for aye, lost pearl of Epinel!
The chill November wind, with moaning loud,
In ominous gusts bewailed through all the dell;
Ursula, though so old and ague-bowed,
Yet would her daughter seek, and wildly vowed
To find the maid—let weal or woe betide!
Her aged limbs were hallowed by no shroud,
And no sweet child stood weeping by her side,
But, anguished and alone, in the drear storm she died.
1850.

AMAVI.

I LOVED : and in the morning sky,
How fairy-like the castle grew !
Cloud-haunted turrets pointing high
Forever to the dreamy blue ;
Bright fountains leaping through and through
The golden sunshine ; on the air
Gay banners streaming ;—never drew
Painter or poet scene more fair.

And in that castle I would live,
And in that castle I would die ;
And there, in curtained bowers, would give
Heart-warm responses—sigh for sigh ;

There, when but one sweet face was nigh,
The orient hours should move along,
And ripple, as they glided by,
Like stanzas of an antique song.

O foolish heart! O young Romance,
That faded with the noon-day sun!
Alas, for gentle dalliance—
For life-long pleasures never won!
Oh, for a season dead and gone!
A wizard time, which then did seem
Only a prelude, leading on
To sweeter portions of the dream!

She died: nor wore my orange flowers:—
No longer, in the morning sky,
That fairy-castle lifts its towers
Which shone, awhile, so lustrously;
Torn are the bannerols, and dry
The silver fountains in its halls;
But the drear sea, with endless sigh,
Moans round and over the crumbled walls.

Let the winds blow ! let the white surge

Ever among those ruins wail !

Its moaning is a welcome dirge

For wishes that could not avail.

Let the winds blow ! a fiercer gale

Is wild within me ! what may quell

That sullen tempest ? I must sail

Whither, O whither, who can tell !

ASTRÆA.

HEAVILY swinging to and fro,
From North to South, and from South to North,
Ever with motion stern and slow,
Moves a pendulum back and forth—
High above in the middle air;
We see it not, but feel it there!

And never ceasing a mournful chime,
Minute by minute—hour by hour,
The earthly cycles of endless time
A clock determines with ceaseless power;
And its shadow falleth, solemnly,
Across the land and over the sea.

There the Angel of Earth abides,
Watching the years as they glide along ;
Sadly watching the bitter tides
Of burning Passion and secret Wrong :
Recording there, with celestial look,
All mortal deeds in the Doomsday-Book.

Up from Earth, through the middle air,
Come human sounds to the Angel's ear,
The orphan's plaint and the widow's prayer ;
Still rolls onward the changing year !
For Time must on, whatever befall,
And the bended heavens are over all.

Never a sigh so soft and low,
That the Angel, hearing, does not weep ;
Yet never a wail so full of woe
As to stay the pendulum in its sweep :
The prayer is answered, and heard the sigh,
But Time must on and the end is nigh.

Forever the pendulum—heeding naught

Of joy or sorrow, of life or death,
Readeth a lesson deeply fraught
With mystic virtue in every breath ;
Veiling, in spectral form uncouth,
An hidden meaning of inward truth.

Telling to all, with stifled voice,
That Earth is changing but Time is sure ;
The heart may weep for its dearest choice,
Still Hope is blessed and Faith is pure ;
Hinting darkly at things to be :
Pointing to Heaven continually.

And slowly the dial-plate, above,
Portions to each his scanty space
Of the rolling years, in which to love,
To pray for mercy and hope for grace :
Telling to all of a time to die,
And ringing the chimes of Eternity.

Forever the Angel seems to say :—
Earthly sufferer, look to Heaven !

*There shall the night give place to day,
There shall the galling chain be riven ;
There shall the weary ones find rest,
There shall the blessed be more blest.*

*Of the Earth are Hate and Wrong,
Of the Heaven are Mercy and Love ;
Dark the mystery ! but, ere long,
It shall be unriddled above ;
Time must on, whatever befall,
But God and His Justice are over all !*

Heavily swinging to and fro,
From North to South, and from South to North,
Ever with motion stern and slow,
Moves a pendulum back and forth—
High above in the middle air ;
We see it not, but feel it there.

THE ALBUM.

THE Winter had but just begun,
The hills with snow were white,
Far southward sank the Christmas sun
When first you bid me—"Write!"
And, Lady, I had little thought
That Spring its zephyrs would have brought,
Its birds and sunny hours,
Before the Album would have flown,
Like carrier-dove, unto its own,
With all its gathered flowers.

But I have waited lingeringly,
While many a Winter's day,
And many a night, have speeded by

In ominous array.
Weeks have I loitered, till for shame
I hardly dare to scrawl my name,
Or bow me at your throne ;
Yet, Lady, I can featly prove,
By every gallant law of Love,
The fault is all your own.

For I have not delayed so long
Without a thought of duty,
But oft have tried to pen a song
In honor of your beauty,
Which, in whatever mood or guise,
Still seems diviner, to these eyes,
Than to her Numa seemed
Egeria's—beside the rill
That, from their green Arician hill,
Forever gushed and gleamed.

But still sweet thoughts will fill one's mind,
Whene'er, in rhyming mood,
I take your book, and feel inclined
6*

To make my promise good :
Sweet thoughts, like elves that wizards raise,
Charming away the lonely days
With pleasant witchery :—
That form has bent above this book,
Those eyes have given it many a look,
That face has smiled on me !

That hand has dallied with these leaves,
And idly turned them o'er :
What wonder that your poet grieves
The Album to restore !
These halcyon thoughts I would not lose,
And wayward Fancy still pursues .
The memory of that smile,
Till I am fain to close the book,
And the fond song I undertook
Defer a longer while.

You could not blame me, should I keep
Your Album always nigh,
Else spoil the ruby of your lip,

And dim that lustrous eye!
For myriad memories will throng
In graceful groups;—the flowing song
Give place to tender dreams,
That supersede the minstrel's art—
Throw golden chains around his heart,
And kindle future themes.

THE INLAND CITY.

GUARDED by circling streams and wooded mountains,
Like sentinels round a queen,
Dotted with groves and musical with fountains,
The city lies serene.

Not far away the Atlantic tide diverges,
And, up the southern shore
Of gray New England, rolls in shortened surges,
That murmur evermore.

The fairy city ! not for frowning castle
Do I extol her name,
Not for the gardens and the domes palatial
Of oriental fame ;

Yet if there be one man who will not rally,

One man, who sayeth not

That of all cities in the Eastern valley

Ours is the fairest spot ;

Then let him roam beneath those elms gigantic,

Or idly wander where

Shetucket flows meandering, where Yantic

Leaps through the cloven air ;

Gleaming from rock to rock with sunlit motion,

Then slumbering in the cove ;

So sinks the soul, from Passion's wild devotion,

To the deep calm of Love.

And journey with me to the village olden,

Among whose devious ways,

Are mossy mansions, rich with legends golden

Of early forest days ;

Elysian time ! when, by the rippling water,

Or in the woodland groves,

The Indian warrior and the Sachem's daughter
Whispered their artless loves ;

Legends of fords, where Uncas made his transit,
Fierce for the border war,
And drove all day the alien Narragansett
Back to his haunts afar ;

Tales of the after-time, when scant and humble
Grew the Mohegan band,
And Tracy, Griswold, Huntington and Trumbull,
Were judges in the land.

So let the caviler feast on old tradition,
And then at sunset climb
Up yon green hill, where, on his broadened vision
May burst the view sublime !

The city spires, with stately power impelling
The soul to look above,
And peaceful homes, in many a rural dwelling,
Lit up with flames of love ;—

And then confess, nor longer idly dally,
While sinks the lingering sun,
That of all cities in the Eastern valley
Ours is the fairest one.

* * * * *

CHARLEY.

God gave him, and, from year to year,
The precious gift yet dearer grew,
And breathed his gentle spirit through
The beings he was sent to cheer.

We watched him :—so the loving gaze
Upon the petals of a rose,
That spread and sweeten, as it grows .
To blossom in the donor's praise.

One day, before our wondering eyes,
Expanded by an inward power,
The infant bud became a flower
In all the hues of Paradise !

The gift was taken, in full bloom ;
But flowers their odors leave behind,
Diffusing all the tempered wind
With Memory's sweet and sad perfume.

ODE TO PASTORAL ROMANCE.

"Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not."

THE TEMPER

I.

QUEEN of the shadowy clime!
Thou of the fairy-spell and wondrous lay:
Sweet Romance! breathe upon my way,
Not with the breath of this degenerate time,
But of that age when life was summer play—
When Nature wore a verdurous hue,
And Earth kept holiday;
When on the ground the Chaldean shepherd lay,
Gazing all night, with calm, creative view,
Into the overhanging blue,
And found, amid the many-twinkling stars,
Warriors and maidens fair,

Heroes of marvellous deeds and direful wars,
Serpents and flaming hair,
The Dragon and the Bear,
A silvery Venus and a lurid Mars.

II.

Come at thy lover's call :
Thou, that, with embraces kind,
Throwing thy tendrils round the lives of all,
Something in all to beautify dost find !
So thine own ivy, on the Gothic wall,
Or pendent from the arms
Of gnarled oaks, where'er its clusters fall,
Clings to adorn and adds perennial charma.
And therefore, Romance, would I greet
Thee by the fairest of fair names,
Calling thee debonair and sweet ;
For sweet thou art—inspiring Manhood's dreams,
When all aweary of the actual life ;
And sweet thy influence seems
To Woman, shrinking from the strife,
The sordid tumult of the wrangling mart ;

But doubly sweet thou art,
Leading the tender child by gentle streams,
Among the lilies of our flowery Youth :
Filling his all-believing heart
With thoughts that glorify the common truth :
Building before him, in the lustrous air,
Ethereal palaces and castles fair.

III.

With such mild innocence the Earth
Received thy blessings at her birth ;
And in the pastoral days of yore,
To Man's enchanted gaze,
Nature was fair—O, how much more
Than in our wiser days !
Then deities of sylvan form,
While yet the hearts of men were young and warm,
Like shepherds wandered through the arching groves,
Or sang aloud, the listening flocks among,
Sweet legends of their loves ;
Then Cupid and fair Psyche breathed their vows—
He with the feathered darts and bow unstrung,

And garlands on his brows;
She folding gently to her bosom doves
Snow-white, forever, as their mistress, young;
Oh! many a classic bard has fondly sung
How whiter than their plumes that bosom seemed,
While through the golden hair, that softly hung
Adown her neck, two liquid mirrors gleamed;
And, as they sighed together, peerless Joy
Enwreathed the maiden and the raptured boy!

IV.

Yes! on romantic pilgrimage,
To the calm piety of Nature's shrine,
Through summer-paths, thou ledst our human-kind,
With influence divine.
In that orient, elden age,
Ere man had learned to wage
Dispassionate war against his natural mind,
Thy voice of mystery,
Reading aloud the Earth's extended page,
Bade human aspirations find
In the cool fountain and the forest-tree

A sentient imagery ;
The flowing river and the murmuring wind,
The land—the sea—
Were all informed by thee !

v.

Through coral grottoes wandering and singing,
The merry Nereid glided to her cave ;
Anon, with warm, luxurious motion flinging
Her sinuous form above the moonlit wave,
To the charmed mariner gave
A glimpse of snowy arms and amber tresses,
While on his startled ear
The sea-nymph's madrigal fell clear ;
Then to the far recesses,
Where drowsy Neptune wears the emerald crown,
Serenely floated down,
Leaving the mariner all amort with fear.
In the under-opening wood,
What time the Gods had crowned the full-grown
year,
The Dryad and the Hamadryad stood

Among the fallow deer ;
Bending the languid branches of their trees,
With every breeze,
To view their image in the fountains near :—
The fountains ! whence the white-limbed Naiads sang,
Pouring upon the air melodious trills,
And, while the echoes through the forest rang,
The white-limbed Naiads of a thousand rills
Far o'er th' Arcadian vales a pæan spread.

Led by Diana, in the dewy morn,
The Oread sisters chased the dappled fawn
Through all the coverts of their native hills ;
Home, with the spoils, at sultry noon they fled—

Home to their shaded bowers,
Where, with the ivy, and those sacred flowers
That now have faded from the weary earth,
Each laughing Oread crowned an Oread's head.
The mountains echoed back their maiden mirth,
Rousing old Pan, who, from a secret lair,
Shook the wild tangles of his frosty hair,
And laid him down again with sullen roar :
The frightened nymphs, like Parian statues, stand,

One balancing her body half in air—
Dreading to hear again that tumult sore ;
One, with a liquid tremor in her eye,
Waving above her head a glimmering hand ;
Till suddenly, like dreams, away they fly,
Leaving the forest stiller than before !

VI.

Such was thy power, O Pastoral Romance !
In that ambrosial age of classic fame,
The spirit to entrance.
Fain would I whisper of the latter days,
When, in thy royal name,
The mailed knights encountered lance to lance,
All for sweet Romance and fair ladye's praise ;
But no ! I bowed the knee
And vowed allegiance to thee,
As I beheld thee in thy golden prime,
And now from thy demesne must haste away :
Perchance that of the aftertime,
Of nodding plumes and chivalrous array,
In aftertime I sing a roundelay.

VII.

Fair Spirit, of etherial birth !
In whom such mysteries and beauties blend !
Still from thine ancient dwelling-place descend
And idealize our too material earth ;
Still to the Bard thy chaste conceptions lend—
To him thine early purity renew ;
Round every image grace majestic throw !
Till rapturously the living song shall glow
With inspiration as thy being true,
And Poesy's creations, deckt by thee,
Shall wake the tuneful thrill of sensuous ecstasy.

•

THE TRIBUNE LYRICS.



THE BALLAD OF LAGER BIER.

In fallow college days, Tom Harland,
We both have known the ways of Yale,
And talked of many a nigh and far land,
O'er many a famous tap of ale.
There still they sing their Gaudeamus,
And see the road to glory clear;
But taps, that in our day were famous,
Have given place to Lager Bier.

Now, settled in this island-city,
We let new fashions have their weight;
Though none too lucky—more's the pity!—
Can still beguile our humble state,

By finding time to come together,
In every season of the year,
In sunny, wet, or windy weather,
And clink our mugs of Lager Bier.

On Winter evenings, cold and blowing,
'Tis good to order "'alf-and-'alf"—
To watch the fire-lit pewter glowing,
And laugh a hearty English laugh ;
Or even a sip of Bourbon whisky
Can raise a hundred phantoms dear
Of days, when boyish blood was frisky,
And no one heard of Lager Bier.

We 've smoked in Summer with Oscanyan,
Cross-legged in that defunct bazaar,
Until above our heads the banyan
Or palm-tree seemed to spread afar ;
And, then and there, have drunk his sherbet,
Tinct with the perfumes of Cashmere :
That orient calm ! who would disturb it
With Norseland calls for Lager Bier !

There's Mendes' chocolate—nothing sweeter
At midnight, when the dying strain,
Just warbled by La Favorita,
Still hugs the music-haunted brain ;
Yet of all bibulous compoundings,
Extracts or brewings, mixed or clear,
The best, in substance and surroundings,
For frequent use, is Lager Bier.

Karl Schæffer is a stalwart brewer,
Who hath above his vaults a hall,
Where—fresh-tapped, foaming, cool and pure—
He serves the nectar out to all.
Tom Harland, have you any money ?
Why, then, we'll leave this hemisphere,
This western land of milk and honey,
For one that flows with Lager Bier.

Go, flaxen-haired and blue-eyed maiden !
My German Hebe, hasten through
Yon smoke-cloud, and return thou laden
With bread and cheese and bier for two.

Limburger suits this bearded fellow :

His brow is high—his taste severe :

But I'm for Schweitzer, mild and yellow,

To eat with bread and Lager Bier.

Ah, yes! the Schweitzer hath a savor

Of marjoram and mountain thyme,

An odoriferous, Alpine flavor ;

You almost hear the cow-bells chime

While eating it, or, dying faintly,

The *Ranz-des-vaches* entrance the ear,

Until you feel quite Swiss and saintly,

Above your glass of Lager Bier.

Here comes our drink, froth-crowned and sunlit,

In goblets with high-curving arms,

Drawn from a newly-opened runlet—

As Bier must be, to have its charms.

This primal portion each shall swallow

At one draught, for a pioneer ;

And thus a ritual usage follow

Of all who honor Lager Bier.

Glass after glass, in due succession,
Till, borne through midriff, heart and brain,
He mounts his throne and takes possession—
The genial Spirit of the grain!
Then comes the old Berserkir madness,
To make each man a priest and seer,
And, with a Scandinavian gladness,
Drink deeper draughts of Lager Bier!

Go, maiden, fill again our glasses!
While, with anointed eyes, we scan
The blouse Teutonic lads and lasses—
The Saxon—Pruss—Bohemian—
The sanded floor—the cross-beamed gables—
The ancient Flemish paintings queer—
The rusty cup-stains on the tables—
The terraced kegs of Lager Bier.

And is it Göttingen, or Gotha,
Or Munich's ancient Wagner Brei,
Where each Bavarian drinks his quota,
And swings a silver tankard high?

Or some ancestral Gast-Haus lofty
In Nuremburg—of famous cheer,
When Hans Sachs lived, and where, so oft, he
Sang loud the praise of Lager Bier?

For even now some curious glamour
Has brought about a misty change!
Things look, as in a moonlight dream, or
Magician's mirror, quaint and strange:
Some wierd, phantasmagoric notion
Impels us backward many a year,
And far across the Northern Ocean,
To Fatherlands of Lager Bier.

As odd a throng I see before us,
As ever haunted Brocken's height,
Carousing, with unearthly chorus,
On any wild Walpurgis-night;
I see the wondrous art-creations!
In proper guise they all appear,
And, in their due and several stations,
Unite in drinking Lager Bier.

I see in yonder nook a trio :

There's Doctor Faust, and, by his side,
Not half so love-distraught as Io,

Is gentle Margaret, heaven-eyed ;
That man in black beyond the waiter—

I know him by his fiendish leer—
Is Mephistophiles, the traitor !

And how he swigs his Lager Bier !

Strange if great Goethe should have blundered,

Who says that Margaret slipt and fell
In Anno Domini Sixteen Hundred,

Or thereabout, and Faustus——well,
We won't deplore his resurrection,

Since Margaret is with him here,
But, under her serene protection,

May boldly drink our Lager Bier.

That bare-legged gipsy, small and lithy,

Tanned like an olive by the sun,
Is little Mignon ; sing us, prithee,

Kennst du das Land, my pretty one !

Ah, no! she shakes her Southern tresses,
As half in doubt and more in fear;
Perhaps the elvish creature guesses
We 've had too much of Lager Bier.

There moves, full-bodied, ripe and human,
With merry smiles to all who come,
Karl Schæffer's wife—the very woman
Whom Rubens drew his Venus from!
But what a host of tricksome graces
Play round our fairy Undine here,
Who pouts at all the bearded faces,
And, laughing, brings the Lager Bier.

“Sit down, nor chase the vision farther,
You 're tied to Yankee cities still!”
I hear you, but so much the rather
Should Fancy travel where she will:
Yet, let the dim ideals scatter;
One puff, and lo! they disappear;
The comet, next, or some such matter,
We 'll talk above our Lager Bier.

Now, then, your eyes begin to brighten,
And marvellous theories to flow ;
A philosophic theme you light on,
And, spurred and booted, off you go !
If e'er—to drive Apollo's phaeton—
I need an earthly charioteer,
This tall-browed genius I will wait on,
And prime him first with Lager Bier.

But higher yet, in middle Heaven,
Your steed seems taking flight, my friend :
You read the secret of the Seven,
And on through trackless regions wend !
Don 't vanish in the Milky Way, for
This afternoon you 're wanted here ;
Come back ! come back ! and help me pay for
The bread and cheese and Lager Bier.

THE DIAMOND-WEDDING.

O, Love! Love! Love! what times were those,
Long ere the age of belles and beaux,
And Brussels lace and silken hose,
When, in the green Arcadian close,
You married Psyche, under the rose,
 With only the grass for bedding!
Heart to heart, and hand in hand,
You followed Nature's sweet command—
Roaming lovingly through the land,
 Nor sighed for a Diamond-Wedding.

So have we read, in classic Ovid,
How Hero watched for her beloved,
 Impassioned youth, Leander.

She was the fairest of the fair,
And wrapt him round with her golden hair,
Whenever he landed cold and bare,
With nothing to eat and nothing to wear,
And wetter than any gander ;
For Love was Love, and better than money :
The slyer the theft, the sweeter the honey :
And kissing was clover, all the world over,
Wherever Cupid might wander.

So thousands of years have come and gone,
And still the moon is shining on,
Still Hymen's torch is lighted ;
And hitherto, in this land of the West,
Most couples in love have thought it best
To follow the ancient way of the rest,
And quietly get united.

But now, True Love, you're growing old—
Bought and sold, with silver and gold,
Like a house, or a horse and carriage !
Midnight talks,

Moonlight walks,
The glance of the eye and sweetheart sigh,
The shadowy haunts with no one by,
I do not wish to disparage ;
But every kiss
Has a price for its bliss,
In the modern code of marriage ;
And the compact sweet
Is not complete,
Till the high contracting parties meet
Before the altar of Mammon ;
And the bride must be led to a silver bower,
Where pearls and rubies fall in a shower
That would frighten Jupiter Ammon !

I need not tell
How it befell,
(Since Jenkins has told the story
Over and over and over again,
In a style I cannot hope to attain,
And covered himself with glory !)
How it befell, one Summer's day,

The King of the Cubans strolled this way—
King January 's his name, they say—
And fell in love with the Princess May,
 The reigning belle of Manhattan ;
Nor how he began to smirk and sue,
And dress as lovers who come to woo,
Or as Max Maretzek and Jullien do,
When they sit, full-bloomed, in the ladies' view,
 And flourish the wondrous baton.

He wasn't one of your Polish nobles,
Whose presence their country somehow troubles,
 And so our cities receive them ;
Nor one of your make-believe Spanish grandees,
Who ply our daughters with lies and candies,
 Until the poor girls believe them.
No, he was no such charlatan—
Count de Hoboken Flash-in-the-pan,
Full of gasconade and bravado,
But a regular, rich Don Rataplan
Santa Claus de la Muscovado
Señor Grandissimo Bastinado !

His was the rental of half Havana
And all Matanzas; and Santa Anna,
Rich as he was, could hardly hold
A candle to light the mines of gold
Our Cuban owned, choke-full of diggers;
And broad plantations, that, in round figures,
Were stocked with at least five thousand nig-
gers!

“Gather ye rosebuds while ye may!”
The Señor swore to carry the day,
To capture the beautiful Princess May,
With his battery of treasure;
Velvet and lace she should not lack:
Tiffany, Haughwout, Ball & Black,
Genin and Stewart, his suit should back,
And come and go at her pleasure;
Jet and lava—silver and gold—
Garnets—emeralds rare to behold—
Diamonds—sapphires—wealth untold—
All were hers, to have and to hold;
Enough to fill a peck-measure!

He didn't bring all his forces on
At once, but like a crafty old Don,
Who many a heart had fought and won,
Kept bidding a little higher;
And every time he made his bid,
And what she said, and all they did—

'Twas written down,
For the good of the town,
By Jeems, of *The Daily Flyer*.

A coach and horses, you'd think, would buy
For the Don an easy victory :

But slowly our Princess yielded ;
A diamond-necklace caught her eye,
But a wreath of pearls first made her sigh.
She knew the worth of each maiden-glance,
And, like young colts, that curvet and prance,
She led the Don a deuce of a dance,

In spite of the wealth he wielded.
She stood such a fire of silks and laces,
Jewels, and golden dressing-cases,
And ruby brooches, and jets and pearls,

That every one of her dainty curls
Brought the price of a hundred common girls;
Folks thought the lass demented !
But at last a wonderful diamond ring,
A regular Koh-i-noor, did the thing,
And, sighing with love, or something the same,
(What's in a name ?)
The Princess May consented.

Ring ! ring the bells, and bring
The people to see the marrying !
Let the gaunt and hungry and ragged poor
Throng round the great Cathedral door,
To wonder what all the hubbub's for,
And sometimes stupidly wonder
At so much sunshine and brightness, which
Fall from the church upon the rich,
While the poor get all the thunder.

Ring ! ring, merry bells, ring !
O fortunate few,
With letters blue,

Good for a seat and a nearer view !
Fortunate few, whom I dare not name ;
Dilettante ! Crème de la crème !
We commoners stood by the street façade
And caught a glimpse of the cavalcade ;
 We saw the bride
 In diamonded pride,
With six jewelled maidens to guard her side—
Six lustrous maidens in tarletan :
She led the van of the caravan :
 Close behind her, her mother,
(Drest in gorgeous *moire antique*,
That told, as plainly as words could speak,
She was more antique than the other),
 Leaned on the arm of Don Rataplan
Santa Claus de la Muscovado
Señor Grandissimo Bastinado ;
 Happy mortal ! fortunate man !
And Marquis of El Dorado !

In they swept, all riches and grace,
Silks and satins and Honiton lace ;

In they swept from the dazzled sun,
And soon in the church the deed was done.
Three prelates stood on the chancel high :
A knot, that gold and silver can buy,
Gold and silver may yet untie,
 Unless it is tightly fastened ;
What 's worth doing at all 's worth doing well,
And the sale of a young Manhattan belle
 Is not to be pushed or hastened ;
So two Very-Reverends graced the scene,
And the tall Archbishop stood between,
 By prayer and fasting chastened :
The Pope himself would have come from Rome,
But Garibaldi kept him at home.
Haply these robed prelates thought
Their words were the power that tied the knot ;
But another power that love-knot tied,
And I saw the chain round the neck of the bride—
A glistening, priceless, marvellous chain,
Coiled with diamonds again and again,
 As befits a diamond-wedding ;
Yet still 'twas a 'chain, and I thought she knew it,

And halfway longed for the will to undo it,
By the secret tears she was shedding.

But isn't it odd, to think, whenever
We all go through that terrible River,
Whose sluggish tide alone can sever
(The Archbishop says) the Church decree,
By floating one into Eternity
And leaving the other alive as ever—
As each wades through that ghastly stream,
The satins that rustle, and gems that gleam,
Will grow pale and heavy, and sink away
To the noisome River's bottom-clay ;
Then the costly bride, and her maidens six,
Will shiver upon the banks of the Styx,
Quite as helpless as they were born—
Naked souls, and very forlorn ;
The Princess, then, must shift for herself,
And lay her royalty on the shelf ;
And the beautiful Empress over yonder,
Whose crinoline made the wide world wonder,
And even ourselves, and our dear little wives,

Who calico wear each morn of their lives—
And the sewing girls—and *les chiffoniers*,
In rags and hunger the livelong day—
And all the grooms of the caravan—
Aye, even the great Don Rataplan
Santa Claus de la Muscovado
Señor Grandissimo Bastinado,
That gold-encrusted, fortunate man !—
All will land in naked equality :
The lord of a ribboned principality
 Will mourn the loss of his *cordón* :
Nothing to eat, and nothing to wear,
Will certainly be the fashion there !
Ten to one, and I'll go it alone,
Those most used to a rag and bone,
Though here on earth they labor and groan,
Will stand it best when we come to rest,
 On the other side of Jordan.

HOW OLD BROWN TOOK HARPER'S FERRY.

A BALLAD OF THE TIMES.

(Containing ye True History of ye Great Virginia Fright.)

JOHN BROWN in Kansas settled, like a steadfast Yankee
farmer,

Brave and godly, with four sons—all stalwart men
of might ;

There he spoke aloud for Freedom, and the Border-
strife grew warmer,

Till the Rangers fired his dwelling, in his absence—
in the night—

And Old Brown,

Osawatomie Brown,

Came homeward in the morning—to find his house
burned down.

Then he grasped his trusty rifle, and boldly fought for
Freedom ;

Smote from border unto border the fierce, invading
band ;

And he and his brave boys vowed—so might Heaven
help and speed 'em !

They would save those grand old prairies from the
curse that blights the land ;

And Old Brown,

Osawatomie Brown,

Said, "Boys, the Lord will aid us !" and he shoved his
ramrod down.

And the Lord *did* aid these men, and they labored day
and even,

Saving Kansas from its peril—and their very lives
seemed charmed ;

Till the Ruffians killed one son, in the blessed light of
Heaven—

In cold blood the fellows slew him, as he journeyed
all unarmed ;

Then Old Brown,

Osawatomie Brown,
Shed not a tear, but shut his teeth, and frowned a terrible frown!

Then they seized another brave boy—not amid the
heat of battle,

But in peace, behind his plow-share—and they
loaded him with chains,

And with pikes, before their horses, even as they goad
their cattle,

Drove him cruelly, for their sport, and at last blew
out his brains;

Then Old Brown,

Osawatomie Brown,

Raised his right hand up to Heaven, calling Heaven's
vengeance down.

And he swore a fearful oath, by the name of the
Almighty,

He would hunt this ravening evil that had scathed
and torn him so;

He would seize it by the vitals; he would crush it day
and night; he

Would so pursue its footsteps—so return it blow for
blow,

That Old Brown,

Osawatomie Brown,

Should be a name to swear by, in backwoods or in
town!

Then his beard became more grizzled, and his wild
blue eye grew wilder,

And more sharply curved his hawk's-nose, snuffing
battle from afar;

And he and the two boys left, though the Kansas strife
waxed milder,

Grew more sullen, till was over the bloody Border
War,

And Old Brown,

Osawatomie Brown,

Had gone crazy, as they reckoned by his fearful glare
and frown.

So he left the plains of Kansas and their bitter woes
behind him,

Slipt o't into Virginia, where the statesmen all are
born,
Hired a farm by Harper's Ferry, and no one knew
where to find him,
Or whether he'd turned parson, or was jacketed and
shorn ;
For Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Mad as he was, knew texts enough to wear a parson's
gown.

He bought no plows and harrows, spades and shovels,
or such trifles ;
But quietly to his rancho there came, by every train,
Boxes full of pikes and pistols, and his well-beloved
Sharp's rifles ;
And eighteen other madmen joined their leader there
again.

Says Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
" Boys, we have got an army large enough to whip the
town !

"Whip the town, and seize the muskets, free the negroes and then arm them ;

Carry the County and the State, aye, and all the potent South ;

On their own heads be the slaughter, if their victims rise to harm them—

These Virginians! who believed not, nor would heed the warning mouth."

Says Old Brown,

Osawatomie Brown,

"The world shall see a Republic, or my name is not John Brown."

'Twas the sixteenth of October, on the evening of a Sunday :

"This good work," declared the captain, "shall be on a holy night!"

It was on a Sunday evening, and, before the noon of Monday,

With two sons, and Captain Stephens, fifteen privates—black and white,

Captain Brown,

Osawatomie Brown,
Marched across the bridged Potomac, and knocked the
sentinel down ;
Took the guarded armory-building, and the muskets
and the cannon ;
Captured all the county majors and the colonels, one
by one ;
Scared to death each gallant scion of Virginia they ran
on,
And before the noon of Monday, I say, the deed was
done.

Mad Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
With his eighteen other crazy men, went in and took
the town.

Very little noise and bluster, little smell of powder,
made he ;

It was all done in the midnight, like the Emperor's
coup d'état ;

"Cut the wires : stop the rail-cars : hold the streets
and bridges !" said he,

Then declared the new Republic, with himself for
guiding star—

This Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown !

And the bold two-thousand citizens ran off and left the
town.

Then was riding and railroading and expressing here
and thither !

And the Martinsburg Sharpshooters and the Charles-
town Volunteers,

And the Shepherdstown and Winchester Militia, hast-
ened whither

Old Brown was said to muster his ten-thousand
grenadiers !

General Brown !

Osawatomie Brown ! !

Behind whose rampant banner all the North was pour-
ing down.

But at last, 'tis said, some prisoners escaped from Old
Brown's durance,

And the effervescent valor of Ye Chivalry broke forth,
When they learned that nineteen madmen had the
marvellous assurance,
Only nineteen, thus to seize the place and drive
them frightened forth ;
And old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Found an army come to take him, encamped around
the town.

But to storm, with all the forces I have mentioned, was
too risky ;
So they hurried off to Richmond for the Govern-
ment Marines,
Tore them from their weeping matrons—fired their
souls with Bourbon whisky,
Till they battered down Brown's castle with their
ladders and machines ;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Received three bayonet stabs, and a cut on his brave
old crown.

Tallyho! the old Virginia gentry gather to the baying!

In they rushed and killed the game, shooting lustily
away;

And whene'er they slew a rebel, those who came too
late for slaying,

Not to lose a share of glory, fired their bullets in his
clay;

And Old Brown,

Osawatomie Brown,

Saw his sons fall dead beside him, and between them
laid him down.

How the conquerors wore their laurels; how they
hastened on the trial;

How Old Brown was placed, half-dying, on the
Charlestown Court-House floor;

How he spoke his grand oration, in the scorn of all de-
nial;

What the brave old madman told them—these are
known the country o'er.

“Hang Old Brown,

Osawatomie Brown,”

Said the Judge, "and all such rebels!" with his most
judicial frown.

But, Virginians, don't do it! for I tell you that the
flagon,

Filled with blood of Old Brown's offspring, was first
poured by Southern hands ;

And each drop from Old Brown's life-veins, like the red
gore of the dragon,

May spring up a vengeful Fury, hissing through your
slave-worn lands !

And Old Brown,

Osawatomie Brown,

May trouble you more than ever, when you've nailed
his coffin down !

NOVEMBER, 1859.

ODE:

GLIMPSES OF HEAVEN.

"O isplendor di Dio, per cu' io vidi
L'alto trionfo del regno verace,
Dammi virtude a dir com' io lo vidi."

DANTE: IL PARADISO.

"Now more than ever seems it rich to die!"

KEATS.

GLIMPSES OF HEAVEN.

I.

THERE comes a fresher coolness o'er the sea :
New murmurs wander from the hither strand ;
Like music from a far-off land,
Is heard the fisher's twilight glee ;
The white waves ripple on the sand ;
Eve opens wide, once more,
The entrance on her sea without a shore,
The gaze into Infinity—
That semblance of Divinity,
That larger prospect than the Noonday bore !

II.

Now watch-lights beacon from afar,

O'er restless waters, one by one ;
But in the western pathway of the sun,
More luminous, the affluent Evening Star
Loops up her silvery robe, and hastens on
Through tideless depths, where no commotions are.
Eastward great Aldebaran sheds his light ;
 Behind him linger yet, in fear
 Of dread Orion's ancient war,
Alcyone and all her sisters bright ;
 I see the Northern Charioteer
On fiery wheels along the horizon roll ;
 A thousand orbs at once appear !
The Milky Way flows on to either Pole,
Each spark of lustrous haze a blazing sphere ;
I see the radiant worlds, and, ah ! their choral song
 would hear.

III.

O shining multitude !
Effulgent glories of the purer air !
What earthly films about us so preclude
 Communion with you there ?

Are ye as full of care,
Of harsh disquietude,
Of grief and Man's despair,
As this dark world from whence we make our moan ?
Where then are those celestial realms ? O, where
That clime of bliss about the pearly throne,
That central Heaven, round which all motions move—
Region of light and love
Ineffable, where dreaming pilgrims see
Green fields and golden fruit and water of life ?
O answer planets ! O make answer ye
Fixed luminous suns, that shine
Down from your placid heights upon our strife !
Pellucid ether ! through all time surrounding
This grosser matter, through all space abounding,
Is there no voice—no sign ?

IV.

Rapt watcher of the skies !
No sound of mortal speech,
From those bright orbs, shall reach
Thine ears—no mystic signal greet thine eyes

Of light from Paradise :

Yet in their solemn march thou mayest find
Serenest utterance, such as prophets heard
After the earthquake and the rushing wind—
A still, small voice, that loftiest passion stirred
Where'er its whisper fell ;

Even now they tell

Of holier ends than this insatiate strife :
That each can make his own life, of that life
Upholding all things, and which all things bear,

A consecrated shrine ;

That here, and there, and everywhere,
In suns, worlds, ether, water, earth and air,
God's creatures have their joys and griefs like thine,
Nor less the illimitable strong desire

Of ceaseless aspiration—

Forever rising from that first creation,
Through devious paths, to faëry prospects higher.

v.

I shrunk from Death,
Dreading the lapse of sense,

And lest the Spirit no other life might know—
 So rudely banished hence,
With all those inlets closed through which our feelings
 flow ;
Thought might flit away with breath ;
 Taste and touch and seeing
Gone out, our very Being
 Might lose itself in gloom ;
And through that midnight solitude,
Like the lone corpse-light o'er a ruined tomb,
The soul should hover—trembling, wan, and nude.

VI.

Away! away!—these fancies that did brood
Upon my heart! Now, as I skyward gaze
 Where all those cressets glow,
Fed with the same ethereal rays
From whence come earthly hues to cheer and light us so,
 The Shape that was a mystery
Fades out. I see an angel where it stood!
The doubts, that were a terror, turn and flee.
 Leaving its kingdom here below,

The disembodied Soul new power shall know,
And subtler sense, to rule a wider realm ;
So vast a sway beyond its young ideal
At first the Monarch's heart may overwhelm,
But soon shall seem that spacious empery real
 As noontide—when we meet
Familiar faces, in the hurrying street,
And know we live, and know our work aright ;
 Then shall Life broaden on the sight,
 From some imperial height,
More great and calm than now, and wiser and more
 bright.

VII.

But here our weepings furrow
Their mocking lines in many a gentle face ;
And pityingly, each night, doth Sleep embrace
With tenderest arm the weary babes of sorrow :
 Yea, even the eyelids of the slave
Droop 'neath her kisses, and her shadow falls
 On prison walls :—
Most sweet it seems for aye to slumber deep :

"In Heaven is rest!" they cry—and hail the grave,
And clasp their hands and weep—
"Rest! Rest! and Lethe for our aching pain :
O, let us thither flee!
Come, Death, and set us free
That we may taste thy peace and never toil again!"

VIII.

O moaning sons of Earth!
Ye know not whence ye came,
Nor how divine the flame
In which your souls had birth!
Soon of Night's grateful draught ye drink your fill,
For morning brings the sunlight on the hill;
The little birds sing cheerly and anew;
The winds praise God; the life-blood courses through
Your strengthened frames in many a fervid rill;
So at that hour, for whose release ye wait,
A thousand sleeps are merged in one great thrill,
One night and one awaking:
In its swift transit taking
Strength, that shall not abate,

The Soul renews itself forevermore,
And chants a loftier psalm than before!

IX.

Ah, yes! that life shall be
No floating in perpetual balm,
Nor long ignoble calm,
Nor swooning ecstasy
Such as the raptured Hascheesh-Eater knows;
Perfected through each patient, suffering sense,
The Soul into God's image grows
With joy intense;
The lilies of that purer land
Not only in celestial meadows blow—
Are close at hand
Even here, and by the wayside thronging,
For all to gather as they go.
These are the thrills of every hallowed longing:
The dear delight and blessed guerdon
Of Faith, that counts her losses gain;
Hope, that triumphs over pain
And lifts the heaviest burden;

The sweet rewards of each subdued temptation
And, O, divinely sweet ! the bliss of abnegation.

X.

Think not that He—our Father—
Will free the after-life of these alloys,
That can so fuse our native gold, and mould us
To what He would behold us ;
Rather shall Toil still chasten us, and, rather,
New strength to grieve shall come with nobler joys.
Only, as we draw more near
His face, old doubts shall widen and grow clear ;
Perception will be truer ; we shall know
More through those still monitions,
And precious intuitions,
That from his Spirit flow :
Only we shall grow more wise,
Nor toil for meaner ends ; what glorifies,
And waxes brighter till the perfect day,
We shall discern, and humbly dare to sever
From temporal surroundings—seeing, ever,

How little of our love these can repay,
And how they fade and pall, and vanish quite away.

XI.

Now, though having journeyed late—
Far from that enchanted ground—
Though man has left his first estate
And Eden's wildwood,
'Tis but as children leave their childhood,
For larger life and spacious havens bound.
Now, toiling on to something great,
Launched venturously from those green-swarded shores
Upon a rough, tempestuous sea—
Spreading sails and plying oars,
In search of finer countries, even, than he
Saw round him in his infancy—
What though the storms beat and the ocean roars!
Not thus can any tempest wear
Our souls, or make our hearts despair.
Often the helmsmen wonderingly hark
To catch the rustle of angelic wings
About their bark;

Often some bird of Paradise doth light
Upon the upper shrouds, and, while he sings,
 O, swiftly speeds the night,
And heavenly breezes swell the yearning sails !
 Often, in middle watches dark,
 And lowering gales,
Fainting and worn and weary, they may see,
Straight forward from their prow, a little time,
 The clouds roll open lustrously !
Then come those glimpses of the life immortal,
 In glory streaming through the portal,
Flush with the splendor of a sunnier clime !

XII.

But see, how silvery over all the bay
Creeps the white outline of a fairer sheen !
Long since the last, faint, glimmering light of day
Fled from the westward ; in the East, serene,
 Night's stately Queen
Sends out the lucent heralds of her sway.
 Softly the radiant train
Absorb those distant lustres in their own ;

Now through yon trees, that fringe the narrowing main,
Her pages pierce and play about beneath ;
Calm and full-orbed, she mounts her sapphire throne ;
So let me enter, with my latest breath,
Yon clime that glistens through the shadowy gates of
Death !

NOTE.

PAGE 21: PENELOPE.

Readers of Dante will recall the following passage in the Twenty-sixth Canto of the *Inferno*. The shade of Ulysses addresses the Poet:—

— Quando

Mi dipartì da Circe, che sottrasse
Me più d'un anno là presso a Gaeta,
Prima che sì Enea la nominasse
Nè dolcezza del figlio, nè la pieta
Del vecchio padre, nè 'l debito amore,
Lo qual dovea Penelope far lieta,
Vincer poter dentro di me l'ardore
Ch' i' ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto,
E degli vizi umani, e del valore ;
Ma misimi per l'alto mare aperto
Sol con un legno, e con quella compagna
Picciola dalla qual non fin deserto.

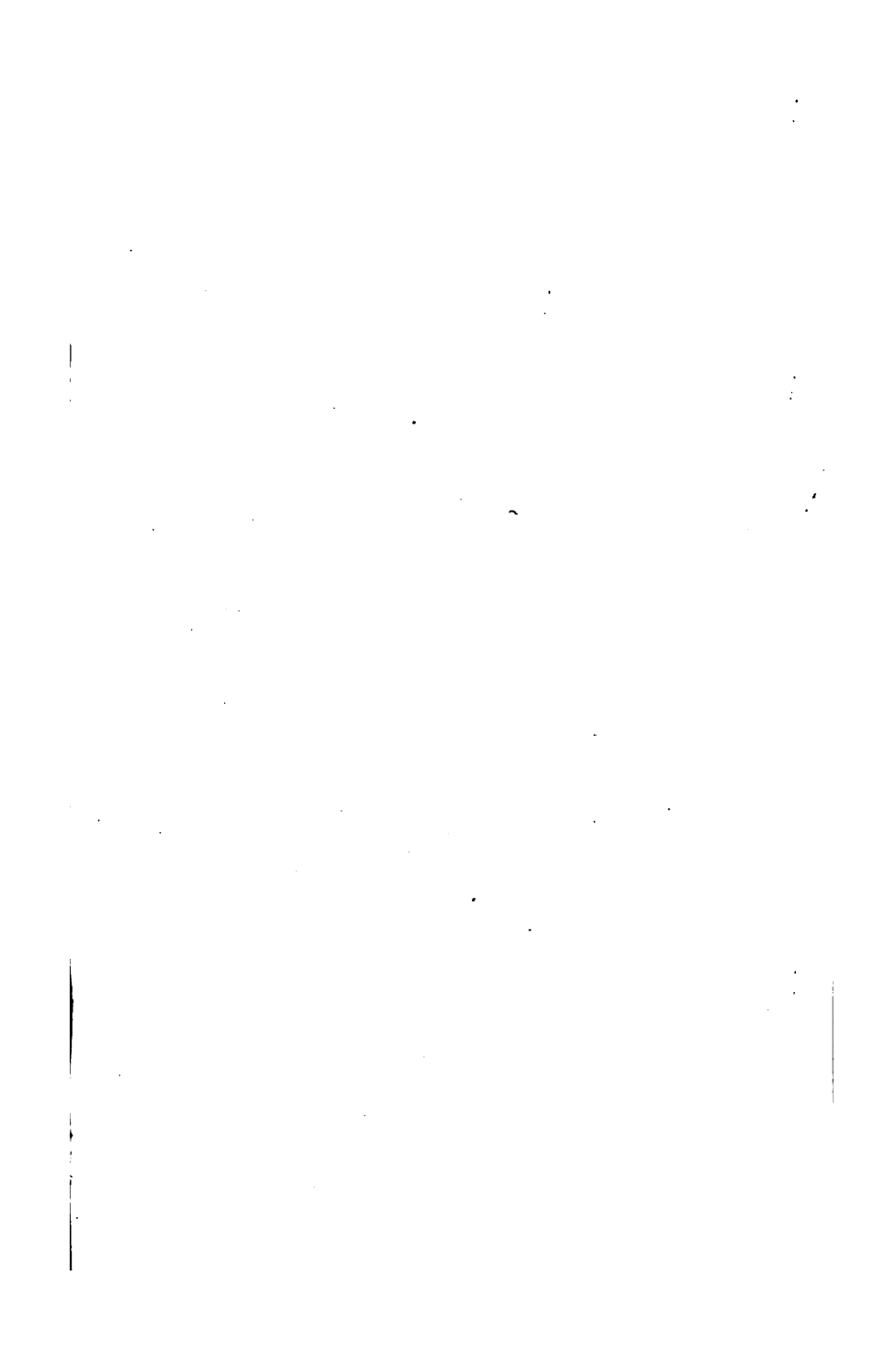
Thus happily translated by Cary :

"—— When I escaped
 From Circe, who beyond a circling year
 Had held me near Caieta by her charms,
 Ere thus Æneas yet had named the shore;
 Nor fondness for my son; nor reverence
 Of my old father, nor return of love,
 That should have crowned Penelope with joy,
 Could overcome in me the zeal I had
 To explore the world, and search the ways of life,
 Man's evil and his virtue. Forth I sailed
 Into the deep illimitable main,
 With but one bark, and the small faithful band
 That yet cleaved to me."

Tasso, in the *Gierusalemme Liberata*, and Pulci, in the *Morgante Maggiore*, both allude to a voyage of Ulysses, imagined to have been undertaken after the Homeric hero's return to Ithaca and repossession of his kingdom. See also the "Ulysses" of Tennyson—who bases on the same conceit a type of the eternal aspiration of our race, in a poem remarkable for grandeur of thought and diction. And yet classic "poetic justice" would indicate a different reward for Penelope's life-long faith, nor is Woman's devotion less heroic than the restless energy of Man.

RH
 S..

THE END.



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